

ARMENIAN ATROCITIES

THE MURDER OF A NATION

BY

ARNOLD J. TOYNBEE

WITH A SPEECH DELIVERED BY

LORD BRYCE

IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS

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Fellow of Balliol College, Oxford

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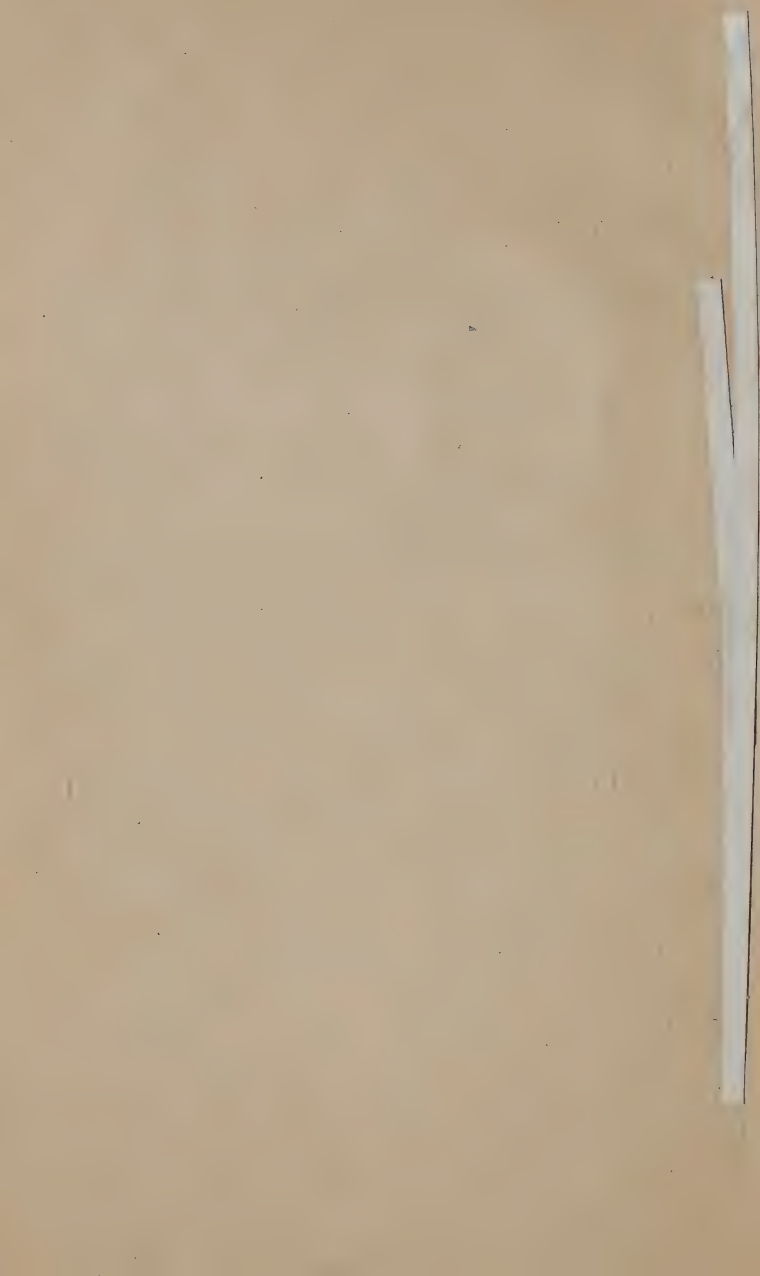
THE SCENE OF THE ATROCITIES.



in square brackets, has been the scene of either of the deported Armenians as reached them, as waiting- on this map, but they must be added to the list.

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THE ARMENIAN MASSACRES.

By LORD BRYCE.*

As His Majesty's Government have, of course, been unable to obtain, except from one or two quarters, such as the Consul at Tiflis quoted by Lord Cromer, any official information with regard to what has been passing in Armenia and Asiatic Turkey, I think it right to make public some further information which has reached me from various sources—sources which I can trust, though for obvious reasons I cannot, by mentioning them here, expose my informants to danger. The accounts come from different quarters, but they agree in essentials, and in fact confirm one another. The time is past when any harm can be done by publicity; and the fuller publicity that is given to the events that have happened the better it will be, because herein lies

* The version here printed embodies Lord Bryce's own revision and enlargement of the official report of his speech delivered in the House of Lords on October 6th, 1915.

the only possible chance that exists of arresting these massacres, if they have not yet been completed.

I am grieved to say that such information as has reached me from several quarters goes to show that the number of those who have perished in the various ways to which I shall refer is very large. It has been estimated at the figure of 800,000. Though hoping that figure to be far beyond the mark, I cannot venture to pronounce it incredible, for there has been an unparalleled destruction of life all over the country from the frontiers of Persia to the Sea of Marmora, only a very few of the cities on the Aegean Coast having so far escaped. This is so, because the proceedings taken have been so carefully premeditated and systematically carried out with a ruthless efficiency previously unknown among the Turks. The massacres are the result of a policy which, as far as can be ascertained, has been entertained for some considerable time by the gang of unscrupulous adventurers who are now in possession of the Government of the Turkish Empire. They hesitated to put it in practice until they thought the favourable moment had come, and that moment seems to have arrived about the month of April. That was the time when these orders were issued, orders which came down in every case from Constantinople, and which the officials found

themselves obliged to carry out on pain of dismissal.

There was no Moslem passion against the Armenian Christians. All was done by the will of the Government, and done not from any religious fanaticism, but simply because they wished, for reasons purely political, to get rid of a non-Moslem element which impaired the homogeneity of the Empire, and constituted an element that might not always submit to oppression. All that I have learned confirms what has already been said elsewhere, that there is no reason to believe that in this case Musulman fanaticism came into play at all. So far as can be made out, though of course the baser natures have welcomed and used the opportunities for plunder which slaughter and deportations afford, these massacres have been viewed by the better sort of religious Moslems with horror rather than with sympathy. It would be too much to say that they have often attempted to interfere, but at any rate they do not seem to have shown approval of the conduct of the Turkish Government.

There is nothing in the precepts of Islam which justifies the slaughter which has been perpetrated. I am told on good authority that high Moslem religious authorities condemned the massacres ordered by Abdul Hamid, and these are far more atrocious.

In some cases the Governors, being pious and humane men, refused to execute the orders that had reached them, and endeavoured to give what protection they could to the unfortunate Armenians. In two cases I have heard of the Governors being immediately dismissed for refusing to obey the orders. Others more pliant were substituted, and the massacres were carried out.

As I have said, the procedure was exceedingly systematic. The whole Armenian population of each town or village was cleared out, by a house-to-house search. Every inmate was driven into the street. Some of the men were thrown into prison, where they were put to death, sometimes with torture ; the rest of the men, with the women and children, were marched out of the town. When they had got some little distance they were separated, the men being taken to some place among the hills where the soldiers, or the Kurdish tribes who were called in to help in the work of slaughter, despatched them by shooting or bayonetting. The women and children and old men were sent off under convoy of the lowest kind of soldiers—many of them just drawn from gaols—to their distant destination, which was sometimes one of the unhealthy districts in the centre of Asia Minor, but more frequently the large desert in the province of Der el Zor, which lies east of

Aleppo, in the direction of the Euphrates. They were driven along by the soldiers day after day, all on foot, beaten or left behind to perish if they could not keep up with the caravan ; many fell by the way, and many died of hunger. No provisions were given them by the Turkish Government, and they had already been robbed of everything they possessed. Not a few of the women were stripped naked and made to travel in that condition beneath a burning sun. Some of the mothers went mad and threw away their children, being unable to carry them further. The caravan route was marked by a line of corpses, and comparatively few seem to have arrived at the destinations which had been prescribed for them—chosen, no doubt, because return was impossible and because there was little prospect that any would survive their hardships. I have had circumstantial accounts of these deportations which bear internal evidence of being veracious, and I was told by an American friend who has lately returned from Constantinople that he had heard accounts at Constantinople, confirming fully those which had come to me, and that what had struck him was the comparative calmness with which these atrocities were detailed by those who had first-hand knowledge of them. Things which we find scarcely credible excite little surprise in Turkey. Massacre was the order of the day

in Eastern Rumelia in 1876, and, in 1895-6, in Asiatic Turkey.

When the Armenian population was driven from its homes, many of the women were not killed, but reserved for a more humiliating fate. They were mostly seized by Turkish officers or civilian officials, and consigned to their harems. Others were sold in the market, but only to a Moslem purchaser, for they were to be made Moslems by force. Never again would they see parents or husbands—these Christian women condemned at one stroke to slavery, shame and apostasy. The boys and girls were also very largely sold into slavery, at prices sometimes of only ten to twelve shillings, while other boys of tender age were delivered to dervishes, to be carried off to a sort of dervish monastery, and there forced to become Musulmans.

To give one instance of the thorough and remorseless way in which the massacres were carried out, it may suffice to refer to the case of Trebizond, a case vouched for by the Italian Consul who was present when the slaughter was carried out, his country not having then declared war against Turkey. Orders came from Constantinople that all the Armenian Christians in Trebizond were to be killed. Many of the Moslems tried to save their Christian neighbours, and offered them shelter in their houses, but the Turkish authorities were

implacable. Obeying the orders which they had received, they hunted out all the Christians, gathered them together, and drove a great crowd of them down the streets of Trebizond, past the fortress, to the edge of the sea. There they were all put on board sailing boats, carried out some distance on the Black Sea, and there thrown overboard and drowned. Nearly the whole Armenian population of from 8,000 to 10,000 were destroyed—some in this way, some by slaughter, some by being sent to death elsewhere. After that, any other story becomes credible; and I am sorry to say that all the stories that I have received contain similar elements of horror, intensified in some cases by stories of shocking torture. But the most pitiable case is not that of those whose misery was ended by swift death, but of those unfortunate women who, after their husbands had been killed and their daughters violated, were driven out with their young children to perish in the desert—where they have no sustenance, and where they are the victims of the wild Arab tribes around them. It would seem that three-fourths or four-fifths of the whole nation has been wiped out, and there is no case in history, certainly not since the time of Tamerlane, in which any crime so hideous and upon so large a scale has been recorded.

Let me add, because this is of some importance in

view of the excuses which, as we understand, the German Government are putting forward, and which their Ambassador in Washington is stated to have given, when he talked about "the suppression of riots," for the conduct of those who are their allies, that there is no ground for the suggestion that there had been any rising on the part of the Armenians. A certain number of Armenian volunteers have fought on the side of the Russians in the Caucasian Army, but they came, as I have been informed, from the Armenian population of Trans-Caucasia. It may be that some few Armenians crossed the frontier in order to fight alongside their Armenian brethren in Trans-Caucasia for Russia, but at any rate, the volunteer corps which rendered such brilliant service to the Russian Army in the first part of the war was composed of Russian Armenians living in the Caucasus. Wherever the Armenians, almost wholly unarmed as they were, have fought, they have fought in self-defence to defend their families and themselves from the cruelty of the ruffians who constitute what is called the Government of the country. There is no excuse whatever upon any such ground as some German authorities and newspapers allege, for the conduct of the Turkish Government. Their policy of slaughter and deportation has been wanton and unprovoked. It

appears to be simply an application of the maxim once enunciated by Sultan Abdul Hamid : " The way to get rid of the Armenian question is to get rid of the Armenians " ; and the policy of extermination has been carried out with far more thoroughness and with far more bloodthirsty completeness by the present heads of the Turkish Administration—they describe themselves as the Committee of Union and Progress—than it was in the time of Abdul Hamid.

There are still, I believe, a few places in which the Armenians, driven into the mountains, are defending themselves as best they can. About 5,000 were taken off lately by French cruisers on the coast of Syria, and have now been conveyed to Egypt, and they tell us that in the heights of Sassoön and in Northern Syria, possibly also in the mountains of Cilicia, there are still a few bands, with very limited provision of arms and munitions, valiantly defending themselves as best they can against their enemies. The whole nation, therefore, is not yet extinct, so far as regards these refugees in the mountains, and those who have escaped into Trans-Caucasia ; and I am sure we are all heartily agreed that every effort should be made that can be made to send help to the unfortunate survivors, hundreds of whom are daily perishing by want and

disease. It is all that we in England can now do ; let us do it, and do it quickly.

I have not so far been able to obtain any authentic information regarding the part said to have been taken by German officials in directing or encouraging these massacres, and therefore it would not be right to express any opinion on the subject. But it is perfectly clear that the only chance of saving the unfortunate remnants of this ancient Christian nation is to be found in an expression of the public opinion of the world, especially that of neutral nations, which may possibly exert some influence even upon the German Government and induce them to take the only step by which the massacres can be arrested. They have hitherto stood by with callous equanimity. Let them now tell the Turkish Government that they are preparing for themselves a well-earned retribution, and that there are some things which the outraged opinion of the world will not tolerate.

BRYCE.

THE EVIDENCE.

The following statement is based upon unimpeachable testimonies. There are the narratives of missionaries—Germans as well as Swiss, Americans and other citizens of neutral countries. There are reports from consuls on the spot, including, again, the representatives of the German Empire. There are numerous private letters and letters published in the Allied and the neutral press, which record the evidence of eye-witnesses as to what they have seen. And there are the series of personal depositions which have already been published by a Committee of distinguished citizens of the United States. The more closely these independent pieces of evidence are examined, the more precisely they prove to bear one another out, sometimes even in the minutest details. The facts contained in them are here presented with full assurance of their truth. It is of course impossible to name such sources of evidence as have not yet been named in print, because this would expose to imminent danger such of them as are within the Turkish dominions.

I. ARMENIA BEFORE THE MASSACRES.

The German War began by working horror and desolation in unaccustomed places—peaceful Belgium and the industrial heart of France. Latterly it has also succeeded in aggravating the wounds of countries already stricken sore. Poland has learnt to envy her condition before August, 1914 ; the Balkan peoples have been robbed of their last hope of fraternity ; and now, on the Eastern fringe of Germany's arena, the intermittent sufferings of the Armenian race have culminated in an organised, cold-blooded attempt on the part of its Turkish rulers to exterminate it once and for all by methods of inconceivable barbarity and wickedness.

The Armenians are perhaps the oldest established of the civilised races in Western Asia, and they are certainly the most vigorous at the present day. Their home is the tangle of high mountains between the Caspian, the Mediterranean, and the Black Seas. Here the Armenian peasant has lived

from time immemorial the hardworking life he was leading till the eve of this ultimate catastrophe. Here a strong, civilised Armenian kingdom was the first state in the world to adopt Christianity as its national religion. Here Church and people have maintained their tradition with extraordinary vitality against wave upon wave of alien conquest from every quarter.

For many centuries past, however, Armenia has not been co-extensive with the Armenian race ; for in the Eastern provinces of the Turkish Empire we find the same phenomenon of racial intermixture and disintegration as has been produced in the Balkans by the operation of the Turkish regime. Under the malignant administration of the Moslem conqueror, the Kurds, also an ancient race, but one which has remained uncivilised, have spread out from their old seats over the Armenian's ancestral mountains. They prefer a wilderness for the pasturage of their sheep and goats, and look askance at the neat villages and well - tilled fields of the original inhabitants of the land. Thus the Armenian has lost the undivided possession of his proper country ; but he has recompensed himself by finding many new homes beyond its borders. For the Armenian is not only an industrious peasant, he has a talent for handicraft and intellectual pursuits. The most harassed village in

the mountains would never despair of its village school, and these schools were avenues to a wider world. He has also that talent for commerce which the Jew displays in Eastern Europe and the Greek in the Levant, and he plays a similar rôle himself, as the skilled workman and the man of business, in the interior of Asiatic Turkey. Every town in Northern Syria and Anatolia had, eight months ago, its populous, prosperous Armenian quarter--the focus of local skill, intelligence and trade, as well as of the town's commercial relations with Constantinople and Europe. At Constantinople itself, the Armenian population had risen to more than 200,000, and there were nearly as many in Tiflis, the capital of Russian Trans-Caucasia. Trans-Caucasia, in fact, with its orderly Christian government and its promising economic development, had become a second home of the Armenian race. The Katholikos, or head of the Armenian Church, resides in Russian territory, at Etchmiadzin, and there were perhaps 750,000 Armenians on the northern side of the Russo-Turkish frontier. Eight months ago, however, these represented a minority of the race, for about 1,200,000 still remained under Turkish rule. Rather more than half this majority was to be found in the original Armenia, east of the upper Euphrates and north of the Tigris. The rest were scattered through all

the towns between the Euphrates and Constantinople. Their numbers were especially strong in the Adana district of Cilicia, a rich plain bordering on the north-east corner of the Mediterranean, while in the mountain fastnesses above the plain the hill towns of Zeitoun and Hadjin were flourishing centres of Armenian life.

The condition of these twelve hundred thousand people—about 8 per cent. of the total population of the Turkish Empire—had always been unenviable. They were treated as a subject race, and lacked the right of bearing arms, a status which, in a lawless country, left them peculiarly at the mercy of their individual Moslem neighbours. But there were advantages to write off against such drawbacks. Among a rather stupid, conservatively inclined Turkish population, their commercial genius gave them a virtual monopoly of trade, and a correspondingly large share in the wealth of the country. Hard-earned gains might often in individual cases be reft away by local tyranny ; but the Armenian's gifts were really indispensable to his masters, and their general recognition of this fact was shown by the general toleration he received from them. In fact, the subject, Christian, intellectual Armenian and the dominant, Moslem, agrarian Turk had settled down into an effective, if rough and ready, equilibrium.

This old-established adjustment of the Armenian problem was first assailed by Sultan Abd-ul-Hamid. His Balkan experience had taught him the policy of keeping the races of his Empire in hand by setting them to massacre one another. Applying it to his Eastern provinces, where he feared that the intelligent and [active Christian population might seek liberty as the Bulgars had sought it and obtained it at Russia's hands in 1878, he redoubled exactions, introduced new oppressions, and ended by enlisting the services of the Kurdish tribesmen as "Hamidieh Cavalry." Official badges and modern rifles were served out to the Kurds in their new capacity, and they were initiated into their welcome duty. The results were the unprecedented Armenian massacres under official direction, that horrified the civilized world in 1895 and 1896, and evoked from Gladstone the last public speech of his old age. When Abd-ul-Hamid was overthrown in 1908 and the "Committee of Union and Progress" proclaimed constitutional government and equal civil rights for all Ottoman citizens, there seemed hope of better things; but the Ottoman Constitution was followed in less than a year by the equally atrocious though less widespread massacres of Adana. Even that paroxysm

passed, but it left a chronic evil behind. Mr. Noel Buxton, who travelled in Turkish Armenia a few months before the outbreak of the present war, reported that the Young Turks had recklessly followed the Hamidian policy of arming the Kurds, and that a fresh disaster was possible at any moment. Then came the war, Turkey entered it on the German side, and the crimes began which will be narrated in the following pages.

The evidence on which the following account is based is drawn from various quarters. Some of it has appeared already in print. A smaller part has been sent privately to Lord Bryce, who has many personal links with the Armenian people. It agrees completely with other material incorporated in the Report (published in full in the United States on October 4th, 1915) of the American Committee of Inquiry—a body of twenty-five members, including two ex-ambassadors to the Porte, and four directors of American mission-work in the Ottoman Empire, as well as persons of such individual eminence as Cardinal Gibbons, Bishops Greer and Rhinelander, Dr. Charles W. Eliot (Ex-President of Harvard University), Mr. Charles R. Crane, Mr. Stephen S. Wise and Mr. John R.

Mott.* The evidence is indeed abundant and direct, and it is also appalling in the uniformity with which it unfolds its otherwise scarcely credible tale. Part of it is from the mouth of neutral witnesses—European or American travellers and men of business who have returned from the interior of Turkey since the horrible work began, or permanent residents sufficiently protected by their status to be able to communicate what they have seen on the spot. Testimony of this unequivocal character forms the backbone of the American Committee's statement; but even in these cases the evidence has to be presented, from

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John R. Mott.

Stephen S. Wise.

motives of precaution, in an anonymous form, and in dealing with testimony from native Armenian sources the necessity for the strictest reticence is even more apparent. The crime has been committed without pretext, but no excuse for continuing it in the cases of individuals who had exposed its horrors, would come amiss to its authors and organisers. Nevertheless, the witness of the Armenians to their own sufferings is as clear as the evidence of their better protected friends. It is headed by the statement of the Katholikos himself, transmitted from Russia to the Armenian National Defence Union in the U.S., and published on September 27th in the American press; and his words are borne out by a confidential letter which another high Armenian ecclesiastic, resident in this case in neutral territory, has received from a prominent fellow-countryman in the stricken area. And then there are the refugees—the remnant of the nation that has found safety behind the Russian lines in the Caucasus, or made its way to Egypt across the friendly Mediterranean. For instance, there were the 4,200 Armenians—men, women and children—from Selefkeh, the port of Antioch, whom the French cruiser squadron landed safely at Port Said at the end of September. They had been seven weeks in the hills, fighting for life with antiquated guns

and scanty ammunition, and with their backs to the sea. Against Turkish regulars reinforced by all the blackguards of the Aleppo slums, their chance seemed desperate ; but they knew it was the only chance they had, for the order had come to prepare within a week for deportation, and the fate of all their deported kinsmen from Anatolia was before their eyes. But this is to anticipate the sequence of the narrative. The evidence in hand has been sufficiently indicated, and it will be better to set forth the whole series of crimes from their beginning.

II. THE PLAN OF THE MASSACRES.

The entrance of Turkey into the War last Autumn did not immediately aggravate the Armenians' lot. Young Turk policy had extended the burden of military service to the Christian as well as the Moslem population ; but that might be regarded in the light of a privilege, as a recognition of the equality of all Ottoman citizens before the law. Moreover, many Armenians had paid commutation in lieu of enrolment. It has been said, and cannot be emphasised too strongly, that the race was industrious, prosperous, devoted to the works of peace. It included a large proportion of highly educated men and not a few educated women, who had been taught in the schools and universities of Europe, or in the excellent colleges of the American missions ; and it supplied Turkey with that class of thinkers and contrivers, teachers, traders and artificers, which gives a country its brain.* The war, again, was directed against Christian powers, and undertaken by those who had massacred their brethren at Adana only five years before. For the

* In Russia many Armenians have achieved distinction in war as well, for example Prince Bagration, Napoleon's opponent in 1812, and Generals Melikoff and Lazareff in the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-8.

Armenians it was not a war of patriotism ; so many Armenian men remained quietly at home, and when those who were drafted were deprived of their arms by order of the Government, and brigaded into labour battalions to work on the roads, it is improbable that they resented the change of duty. Thus the winter passed with little foreboding of the coming spring.

But meanwhile the Government at Constantinople—if Government is not too good a name for Enver, Talaat, and the rest of that “Committee of Union and Progress” which Lord Bryce has justly described as a “gang of unscrupulous ruffians,”—meanwhile, this unprincipled and all - powerful organisation was working out its plans, and it began to put them into action in April.

The scheme was nothing less than the extermination of the whole Christian population within the Ottoman frontiers. For the war had temporarily released the Ottoman Government from the control, slight as it was, which the Concert of Europe had been able to exert. The belligerents on one side were Turkey’s allies and very good friends ; and Enver, looking to the future, relied upon their promised victory to shield himself and his accomplices from the vengeance of the Western powers and Russia, which had always stood between the malignant hostility of the Ottoman

Government and the helplessness of its Christian subjects. The denunciation of the "Capitulations" broke down the legal barrier of foreign protection, behind which many Ottoman Christians had found more or less effective shelter. Nothing remained but to use the opportunity and strike a stroke that would never need repetition. "After this," said Talaat Bey, when he gave the final signal, "there will be no Armenian question for fifty years."

The crime was concerted very systematically, for there is evidence of identical procedure from over fifty places. They are too numerous to be detailed here, but every one of them* is shewn on the accompanying map, and they will be found to include every important town in Armenia proper and in Eastern Anatolia, as well as Ismid and Broussa in the west, not to speak of a number of places in Thrace. There is no object in multiplying the monotonous tale of horror, for the uniform directions from Constantinople† were carried out

* With the exception of six small villages in the Cilician hills.

† "I could not bring myself to believe that it was by order of the Central Government that the Armenians were driven from their homes. It was only at Constantinople that I learnt this fact, and I learnt also that the pressure brought to bear by the Embassies had had no effect."—Extract from a letter (written by an Armenian Protestant to an American citizen) which was published on September 4th, 1915, by the Armenian paper "*Gotchnag*" of New York.

with remarkable exactitude by the local authorities. Only two cases are reported of officials who refused to obey the Government's instructions. One was the local governor of Everek, in the district of Kaisarieh, and he was at once replaced by a more pliable successor. On the other hand, the kaimakam of another place replied to the protest of a German missionary: "If the Law and the Sultan were to forbid it, I would carry out the plan in spite of all, and do as I please." (American Committee's Report.)* In general what happened was this.

On a given day the streets of whatever town it might be were occupied by the local gendarmerie with fixed bayonets, and the Governor summoned all able-bodied men of Armenian race that had been exempted from military draft to present themselves now on pain of death. "Able-bodied" received a liberal interpretation, for it included any male between fifteen and seventy years of age, and these were all marched out of the town by the gendarmes. They had not far to go, for the gendarmerie had been reinforced for the purpose from the gaols, and the brigands and Kurds at large were waiting in the hills. They were waiting to murder

* Hereafter referred to as A.C.R.

the prisoners. The first secluded valley witnessed their wholesale massacre, and, acquitted of their task, the gendarmes marched back leisurely into town.

This was the first act. It precluded the pitiful possibility of resistance to the second, which was of a more ingenious and far reaching kind. The women, old men and children who made up the remainder of the Armenian population, were now given immediate notice of deportation within a fixed term—a week perhaps, or ten days, but commonly a week, and in no case more than a fortnight. They were to be uprooted, whole households, from their homes, and driven off to an unknown destination, while their houses and property were to be transferred to Moslems, on a plan which will be described in the sequel.

It is hardly possible to imagine to oneself the implication of such a decree. These were not savages, like the Red Indians who retired before the White Man across the American continent. They were not nomadic shepherds like their barbarous neighbours the Kurds. They were people living the same life as ourselves, townspeople established in the town for generations and the chief authors of its local prosperity. They were sedentary people, doctors and lawyers and teachers, business men and

artisans and shopkeepers, and they had raised solid monuments to their intelligence and industry, costly churches and well-appointed schools. Their women were as delicate, as refined, as unused to hardship and brutality as women in Europe or the United States. In fact, they were in the closest personal touch with Western civilisation, for many of the Armenian centres upon which the crime was perpetrated had been served by the American missions and colleges for at least fifty years, and were familiar with the fine men and women who directed them.

Communities like this, after being mutilated by the wholesale conscription or assassination of the husbands and fathers, were now torn up by the roots and driven, under the forlorn leadership of the mothers and the old men, into an exile that was to terminate in a death of unspeakable horror.

There was just one possible loophole of escape, apostasy, but it did not do to bid for it too eagerly. It had been available in 1895, and the men of one town on the Euphrates now sought for it to avert their doom.* But their desperate offer was refused; and at another town in Anatolia it was only accepted on the inhuman condition of surrendering their children below the age of twelve years to

* Hoping to return to Christianity in better days.

the Government, to be educated in unknown "orphanages" in the Moslem faith.

Of course these orphanages were quite hypothetical institutions. There were dervish convents, however, which were real and terrible enough. The dervishes are communities of fanatical Moslem devotees, many of whom lead a wandering life in the interior of Anatolia—a barbaric survival of primitive religion. They were allowed to take their choice of the young Armenian boys, and one of Lord Bryce's informants describes how bands of them met the caravans of deported Armenians on their road, and carried off children, shrieking with terror, to bring them up as Moslems in their savage fraternity.

In one place "a plan was formed to save the children by placing them in schools or orphanages, under the care of a committee organised and supported by the Greek Archbishop, of which the Vali was president and the Archbishop vice-president, with three Mohammedan and three Christian members." (A.C.R.) But the plan was rescinded by orders from above ; and

"many of the boys appear to have been sent to another district, to be distributed among the farmers. The best looking of the older girls are kept in houses for the pleasure of members of the gang who seem to rule affairs here. I hear on good authority that a member of the 'Committee of Union and Progress'

here has ten of the handsomest girls in a house in the central part of the city, for the use of himself and his friends." (A.C.R.)

The Armenian journal "*Horizon*," of Tiflis, reported in its issue of Sept. 4th (Aug. 22nd old style) that:—

"A telegram from Bukarest states that the Turks have sent from Anatolia four railway-vans full of Armenian orphans from the interior of the country, to distribute them among the Moslem families."

Such was the fate marked out for the Armenian children who were young enough for assimilation ; but even such a sacrifice was to "reprieve" the parents who consented to it from immediate death alone, and not from the lingering torment of deportation.

Only at one place do we hear that the victims were given the prospect of ransoming themselves completely by accepting Islam for their families and themselves. Here the witness states that "The offices of the lawyers who recorded applications were crowded with people petitioning to become Mohammedans. Many did it for the sake of their women and children. . . ." (A.C.R.) But their escape was a delusion. These converts were marched out of the town like the rest, and were never heard of again.

The majority of the people were not suffered even to play with hopes of security, and the week

of grace was occupied by heartrending scenes. At the last mentioned town "people made preparation for carrying out the Government's orders by selling whatever household possessions they could in the streets. Articles were sold at less than 10 per cent. of their usual value, and Turks from the neighbouring villages filled the streets, hunting for bargains" (A.C.R.) In this instance the Government punished any Moslems that actually seized articles by force ; but in general the authorities were not so meticulous. It must be repeated that the Armenians were people of property, property well earned by intelligent industry, and the indigent Moslem of the slums had always resented the prosperity which Allah had permitted to the subject infidel. Now the Moslem was to come into his own. At a port on the Cilician coast "sewing machines sold for $1\frac{1}{2}$ medjidiehs (about four shillings and ninepence), iron bedsteads for a few piastres," and at a hitherto flourishing port on the Black Sea we are shown a spectacle of wholesale felony.

"The thousand Armenian houses in the town are being emptied of furniture by the police one after the other . . . , and a crowd of Turkish women and children follow the police about like a lot of vultures, and seize anything they can lay their hands on ; and when the more valuable things are carried out of a house by the police, they rush in and take

the balance. I see this performance every day **with my own eyes**. I suppose it will take several weeks to empty all the houses; and then the Armenian shops and stores will be cleared out." (A.C.R.)

A systematic eradication of a whole people, this, and designed to that end, for the German consul told the witness that "He did not believe the Armenians would be permitted to return to the city in question, even after the end of the war." (A.C.R.)

But the Armenians gained little by selling up their goods, for even the trifling sums they realised were more than they were permitted to carry with them. Their journey money was strictly limited to a few shillings, and in fact it would only have exposed them to pillage by their guards if they had attempted to carry more about their persons. Yet if they could not realise their property, there was still less hope of transporting it with them. In many cases the notice was too short for selling out or packing up at all, and this seems to have been especially the case in Cilicia.

"At the mountain village of Geben," for instance "the women were at the wash-tub, and were compelled to leave their wet clothes in the water and take the road barefooted and half-clad, just as they were. In some cases they were able to carry part of their scanty household furniture or implements of agriculture, but for the most part they were neither to carry anything nor to sell it, even where there was time to do so." (A.C.R.)

"In Hadjin well-to-do people, who had prepared food and bedding for the road, were obliged to leave it in the street, and afterwards suffered greatly from hunger." (A.C.R.)

The exiles had reason to be thankful if they could find conveyance for their own persons. Sometimes the government announced that it would provide an ox-cart for each family. But this was often only another opportunity for mockery. In one place, where the people had been given notice to depart on Wednesday, the carts appeared on Tuesday at 3.30 a.m., and the people were ordered to leave at once. "Some were dragged from their beds without even sufficient clothing." In other cases no provision was made at all. For example, at the aforementioned city on the Black Sea coast, the Governor-General told the witness that "the Armenians were allowed to make arrangements for carriages." "But nobody," says the witness, "seemed to be making any arrangements. I know of one wealthy merchant, however, who paid £15 (Turkish) for a carriage to take himself and his wife But about ten minutes drive from the start, they were commanded by the gendarmes to leave the carriage, which was sent back to the city." And it was always the same tale; for the owners of the vehicles were always local Moslems, who had no intention of accompanying the gruesome caravan to its distant destination. After one day's

·march, or two, when the victim's last pence had been extorted in bribes, the drivers turned their oxen about. Often the second batch of a convoy, as it started, saw the carts assigned to the first batch returning empty to the town, and realised that they would have to travel the greater part of their immense journey over the mountains on foot.*

From the impression it made on the witnesses, the scene of departure must in any case have been harrowing enough. From that town on the coast the exiles were despatched in successive batches of about 2,000 each.

"The weeping and wailing of the women and children was most heartrending. Some of these people were from wealthy and refined circles, some were accustomed to luxury and ease. There were clergymen, merchants, bankers, lawyers, mechanics,

* For example, the following incident is related in a letter, printed by the New York paper "*Gotchnag*" on September 4th, to which reference has been made already :—

"When the Government announced that the Armenian population must remove from a certain inland town in Eastern Anatolia, an American missionary, Miss X., obtained permission to accompany the deported people. She bought a carriage, eight carts and six donkeys, for the use of the pupils and teachers of the missionary school on their journey. The Government had placed an ox-cart at the disposal of each family, but no one knows exactly how far the unfortunate deported families have been able to ride, or at what moment they have been compelled to go on foot."

tailors, and men from every walk of life. . . . The whole Mohammedan population knew that these people were to be their prey from the beginning, and they were treated as animals." (A.C.R.)

And here is another description from a different place :

"All the morning the ox-carts creaked out of the town, laden with women and children, and here and there a man who had escaped the previous deportations. The women and girls all wore the Turkish costume, that their faces might not be exposed to the gaze of drivers and gendarmes—a brutal lot of men brought in from other regions. . . .

The panic in the city was terrible. The people felt that the Government was determined to exterminate the Armenian race, and they were powerless to resist. The people were sure that the men were being killed and the women kidnapped. Many of the convicts in the prisons had been released, and the mountains around were full of bands of outlaws. . . .

Most of the Armenians in the district were absolutely hopeless. Many said it was worse than a massacre. No one knew what was coming, but all felt that it was the end. Even the pastors and leaders could offer no word of encouragement or hope. Many began to doubt even the existence of God.* Under the severe strain many individuals became demented, some of them permanently." (A.C.R.)

* A repetition of a case which is reported from the massacres of 1909, when a woman who had seen her child burnt alive in the village church, answered her would-be comforters : "Don't you see what has happened? God has gone mad."

III. THE ROAD TO DEATH.

In this agonising state of apprehension the bands of Armenian women were driven forth on their road. There was a heroism about their exodus, for there was still a loophole of escape, the same alternative of apostasy that had tempted their husbands and fathers. And in their case, at least, apostasy brought the certainty of life, because the condition laid down was their immediate entrance into the harem of a Turk. Life at the price of honour—most of them seem to have rejected it; and yet, if they had known all that lay before them, they might have judged it the better part. As it was, they clutched at the desperate chance of immunity, and presented themselves for the march—playing too unsuspectingly into their conductors' hands. For the gaol-bred gendarmes had no intention of conducting the caravan intact to its destination.

Some were sold into shame before the march began. "One Moslem reported that a gendarme had offered to sell him two girls for a medjidieh (about three shillings and twopence)". They sold the youngest and most handsome at every village

where they passed the night ; and these girls have been trafficked in hundreds through the brothels of the Ottoman Empire. Abundant news has come from Constantinople itself of their being sold for a few shillings in the open markets of the capital ; and one piece of evidence in Lord Bryce's possession comes from a girl no more than ten years old, who was carried with this object from a town of North Eastern Anatolia to the shores of the Bosphorus. These were Christian women, as civilised and refined as the women of Western Europe, and they were enslaved into degradation. Yet they were more fortunate than their companions who were denied even this release from their terrible journey ; and these were old women, mothers of families, mothers actually with child, who were herded on to meet the intolerable hardships which their journey held in store.

“ Women with little children in their arms, or in the last days of pregnancy, were driven along under the whip like cattle. Three different cases came under my knowledge where the woman was delivered on the road, and because her brutal driver hurried her along she died of hemorrhage. Some women became so completely worn out and helpless that they left their infants beside the road.” (A.C.R.)

This latter fact is witnessed from several quarters. One piece of evidence tells of a woman throwing her dying child down a well, that

she might be spared the sight of its last agony.* Another woman, stifled in a crowded cattle-truck on the Anatolian Railway, threw her baby onto the line.

"Six agonised mothers, passing through Konieh by this railway to an unknown destination, entrusted their little children to the Armenian families in the city in order to save them alive; but the local authorities tore them away from the Armenians and placed them in Moslem hands."

This last incident comes from the confidential letter to a high Armenian ecclesiastic which has been mentioned above; and testimony from the American Committee's Report only heightens the horror.

"An Armenian told me that he had abandoned two children on the way because they could not walk, and that he did not know whether they had died of cold and hunger, whether a charitable soul had taken care of them, or whether they had become the prey of wild beasts. Many children seem to have been thus abandoned. One seems to have been thrown into a well."

* The same incident is recorded by a first-hand witness who had come to Constantinople from the interior, and whose general description of the deportations (which tallies exactly with the personal narratives given here) has been resumed by Prof. Hagopian in an article published on September 1st, 1915, by the paper "*Armenia*" of Marseilles.

This confirms the entirely independent testimony to the same incident from another source, and there is evidence of equal weight for many other incidents of equal horror.

"I saw a girl three and a half years old, wearing only a shirt in rags. She had come on foot . . . She was terribly spare, and was shivering from cold, as were also all the innumerable children I saw on that day." (A.C.R.)

Here is a witness who saw one of these caravans on its road.

"They went slowly, most of them fainting from want of food. We saw a father walking with a one-day-old baby in his arms, and behind him the mother walking as well as possible, pushed by the stick of the Turkish guard. It was not uncommon to see a woman fall down and then rise again under the stick." (A.C.R.)

"A young woman, whose husband had been imprisoned, was carried away with her fifteen-days-old baby, with one donkey for all her luggage. After one day and a half of travel, a soldier stole her donkey, and she had to go on foot, her baby in her arms." (A.C.R.)

But the robbery of their goods was not the worst. These poor, worn-out, perishing women were robbed obscenely of their honour, for any who had not brought a few shillings into the gendarmes' pockets by being sold to richer Moslems were abandoned to the gendarmes' own more brutal lust.

"At one place the commander of gendarmerie openly told the men to whom he consigned a large company, that they were at liberty to do what they chose with the women and girls." (A.C.R.)

"The Armenians deported from a certain town," says another witness who saw them pass, "could not be recognised as a result of their twelve days' march . . . Even in this deplorable state, rapes and violent acts are every day occurrences." (A.C.R.)

Age was the only ground of exemption from outrage, and there were women of extreme age in these caravans ; for neither age nor sickness gave exemption from slow murder by deportation.

"A case worthy of notice was that of F.'s sister. Her husband had worked in our hospital as a soldier-nurse for many months. She contracted typhus and was brought to our hospital . . . A few days before the deportation, the husband was imprisoned and exiled without examination or fault. When the quarter in which they lived went, the mother got out of bed in the hospital, and was put on an ox-cart to go with her children." (A.C.R.)

Indeed, the sick and aged could be trusted to die on the road of their own accord.

"The women believed that they were going to worse than death, and many carried poison in their pockets to use if necessary. Some carried picks and shovels to bury those they knew would die by the wayside." (A.C.R.)*

* The same incident is reported in a document transmitted to Lord Bryce. The names of all the parties concerned are given with exactitude in both accounts.

Sometimes their misery was ended unexpectedly soon, when their tormentors gave way prematurely to their lust for blood. At one small village the whole tragedy was enacted in one scene.

"Forty-five men and women were taken a short distance from the village into the valley. The women were first outraged by the officers of the gendarmerie, and then turned over to the gendarmes to dispose of. According to this witness, a child was killed by having its brains beaten out on a rock. The men were all killed, and not a single person survived out of this group of forty-five." (A.C.R.)

"The forced exodus of the last part of the Armenian population from a certain district took place on June 1st, 1915. All the villages, as well as three-quarters of the town, had already been evacuated. An escort of fifteen gendarmes followed the third convoy, which included 4,000 to 5,000 persons. The prefect of the city had wished them a pleasant journey. But at a few hours' distance from the town, the caravan was surrounded by bands of a brigand-tribe, and by a mob of Turkish peasants armed with guns, axes and clubs. They first began plundering their victims, searching carefully even the very young children. The gendarmes sold to the Turkish peasants what they could not carry away with them. After they had taken even the food of these unhappy people, the massacre of the males began, including two priests, one of whom was ninety. In six or seven days all males above fifteen years of age had been murdered. It was the beginning of the end. People on horse-back raised

the veils of the women, and carried off the pretty ones." (A.C.R.)

And here is the same story at first hand (A.C.R.), from a lady who actually experienced the horrors of this murderous march.

She tells how the crime began with the hanging of the Bishop and seven other notables, and the wholesale slaughter in a wood of about eighty men, after they had been imprisoned and flogged in prison. "The rest of the population was sent off in three batches; I was among the third batch. My husband died eight years ago, leaving me and my mother and my eight-year-old daughter extensive possessions, so that we were living in comfort. Since mobilisation, an Ottoman commandant has been living in my house free of rent. He told me not to go, but I felt I must share the fate of my people. I took three horses with me, loaded with provisions. My daughter had some five-lira pieces round her neck, and I carried some twenty liras and four diamond rings on my person. All else that we had was left behind. Our party left on June 1st (old style), fifteen gendarmes going with us."

Then she describes, detail for detail, the surprise attack on the road, the killing of the two priests and of every male over fifteen years of age. Their horses, their valuables, their food—all were taken. "Very many women and girls were carried off to the mountains, among them my sister, whose one-year-old baby they threw away. A Turk picked it up and carried it off, I know not where. My mother

walked till she could walk no further, and dropped by the roadside, on a mountain top. We found on the road many who had been in the previous batches; some women were among the killed, with their husbands and sons. We also come across some old people and their infants, still alive but in a pitiful condition, having shouted their voices away."

And here again the former witness exactly corroborates the narrative.

"On the way," says this other testimony, "we constantly met murdered men and youths, all covered with blood. There were also women and girls killed near their husbands or sons. On the heights of the mountains and in the depths of the valleys numbers of old men and babies were lying on the ground."

They were on the track of the preceding convoys, and the same picture of death is given by witnesses who followed the route of another caravan a short way from its starting point.

"Many persons were obliged to start off on foot without funds and with what they could gather up from their homes and carry on their backs. Such persons naturally soon became so weak that they fell behind and were bayoneted and thrown into the river, and their bodies floated down to the sea, or lodged in the shallow river on rocks, where they remained for ten or twelve days and putrefied."

Yet those were fortunate who found even such a death, for they escaped the increasing torments which the survivors had to suffer.

"We were not allowed to sleep at night in the villages," says the Armenian lady, "but lay down outside. Under cover of the night indescribable deeds were committed by the gendarmes, brigands and villagers. Many of us died from hunger and strokes of apoplexy. Others were left by the roadside, too feeble to go on." The parallel account confirms her once more in almost identical words, and adds that "the people found themselves in the necessity of eating grass."

Yet even so, many failed to succumb, and the warders had to thin the ranks by still more drastic means.

"The worst and most unimaginable horrors," the lady continues, "were reserved for us at the banks of the (Western) Euphrates (Kara Su) and the Erzindjan plain. The mutilated bodies of women, girls and little children made everybody shudder. The brigands were doing all sorts of awful deeds to the women and girls that were with us, whose cries went up to heaven. At the Euphrates, the brigands and gendarmes threw into the river all the remaining children under fifteen years old. Those who could swim were shot down as they struggled in the water."

But the narrator was condemned to outlive this spectacle. "On the next stage of the journey, the fields and hill-sides were dotted with swollen and blackened corpses, which filled and fouled the air with their stench." It was not till the thirty-second day of their march that they reached a temporary halting place, where the narrative comes to an end.

What has been this woman's subsequent fate we do not know, for the halting place was less than half way to her final destination, and it is impossible to conceive the suffering already crowded into that first month. The mere physical cruelty of it is appalling—a delicate lady driven thirty-two days' journey on foot through some of the roughest mountain-country in the world. The spiritual torment could perhaps only be fathomed by actual experience. And this is only one narrative out of scores, chosen here because it is delivered with exactitude by the mouth of two witnesses, not because it is in any way unique. On the contrary, the same horrors were being enacted in hundreds of Anatolian towns and villages and over thousands of miles of savage mountain trails, enacted and repeated from the month of April till the present moment. And the narratives are not open to doubt. Those gathered together in the American Committee's Report were all recorded and endorsed by authoritative auditors. And they are not vague denunciations, or highly coloured generalisations. There are, of course, many general accounts of these atrocities in addition to these individual testimonies; but they, too, are remarkably free from vagueness and exaggeration, and when they are compared with the first-hand evidence, they show agreement with it even in minute details.

For instance there is Professor Hagopian's resumé (published in the "*Armenia*" of Marseilles on September 1st, 1915) of the general impressions gathered by a witness who had recently come from the interior of Anatolia to Constantinople. He describes, soberly and exactly, the gangs of prisoners being driven across the mountains, the blows of the gendarmes, the children born on the road, the mothers and old men dying of exhaustion, even the incident of the woman throwing her baby into the well (see p. 41 above).

The somewhat longer description, given in the letter to a high Armenian ecclesiastic in neutral territory, is so remarkable in its agreement that certain passages deserve to be quoted in illustration.

"In four provinces," says this letter, "the local authorities gave facilities to those condemned to deportation—five or ten days' grace, permission to execute a partial sale of their property, and the privilege of hiring a cart between several families; but, at the end of several days, the carters left them on the road and returned to town. *The caravans thus formed used to meet on the morrow, or sometimes several days after their start, with bands of brigands, or else with Moslem peasants, who plundered them of everything. The bands fraternised with the gendarmes, and killed the few men or boys included in the caravans. They carried off the women, girls and children, leaving only the*

old women, who were driven along by the gendarmes with blows of the whip and died of hunger on the road. A first-hand witness tells us how the women deported from a certain province were left, after several days, in the plain of Kharpout, where they all died of starvation (fifty or sixty a day): and the authorities have merely sent a few people to bury them, so as not to endanger the health of the Moslem population .

“The caravans of women and children are exposed in front of the Government buildings in every town or village where they pass, in order that the Moslems may take their choice.

“The caravan despatched from [the actual town from which the lady was deported whose narrative we have quoted above] was thinned out in this fashion, *and the women and children who remained over were thrown into the Euphrates at the place called Kemakh-Boghazi, just outside Erzindjan.*”

This passage is particularly important, because it relates events for which we already have the evidence of two quite independent, first-hand witnesses. Anyone who compares the italicised sentences with the extracts quoted from the Armenian lady and her fellow-victim immediately above, will see that the general report—the story as it circulated through the interior of Anatolia and travelled to Constantinople and Marseilles—is very far from being exaggerated. It is less grue-

some, less extreme, in its details, than the original testimony itself ; and this evident sobriety of the general rumour, in a case where we can put it to the test, must obviously strengthen our belief in cases where the facts alleged are supported by secondary evidence alone.

This secondary evidence, however, is really superfluous. The first-hand testimonies are abundant enough, and convincing enough, to afford in themselves a thorough exposition of the crime. They are concrete statements, fortified throughout by the names of well-known individuals who have either witnessed these atrocities or been their victims. For reasons of common prudence these names have to be withheld ; but anyone who glances at the American Committee's Report will see by the number of blanks, where names should be, how direct and personal this evidence is.

Moreover, the testimony comes from many independent quarters. From the town where the Armenian lady's journey was broken, we have the narrative of a foreign resident, the citizen of a neutral state. It is a town on the Eastern Euphrates (Murad Su), a meeting-place of routes from north to south, and very many convoys of exiles passed this way.

"If," the resident writes, "it were simply a matter of being obliged to leave here to go somewhere else.

it would not be so bad, but everybody knows it is a case of going to one's death. If there was any doubt about it, it has been removed by the arrival of a number of parties, aggregating several thousand people, from Erzeroum and Erzindjan. I have visited their encampment a number of times and talked with some of the people. They are, almost without exception, ragged, filthy, hungry and ill. That is not surprising, in view of the fact that they have been on the road for nearly two months, with no change of clothing, no chance to wash, no shelter, and little to eat. The Government has been giving them some scanty rations here. I watched them one time when their food was brought. Wild animals could not be worse. They rushed upon the guards who carried the food and the guards beat them back with clubs, hitting hard enough to kill them sometimes. To watch them one could hardly believe that these people were human beings.

"As one walks through the camp, mothers offer their children and beg one to take them. In fact, the Turks have been taking their choice of these children and girls for slaves, or worse. In fact, they have even had their doctors there to examine the more likely girls and thus secure the best ones.

"There are very few men among them, as most of them have been killed on the road. All tell the same story of having been attacked and robbed by the Kurds. Most of them were attacked over and over again, and a great many of them, especially the men, were killed. Women and children were also killed. Many died, of course, from sickness and exhaustion

on the way, and there have been deaths each day that they have been here. Several different parties have arrived and, after remaining a day or two, have been pushed on with no apparent destination. Those who have reached here are only a small portion, however, of those who started. By continuing to drive these people on in this way it will be possible to dispose of all of them in a comparatively short time.

“Among those with whom I have talked were three sisters. They had been educated at — and spoke excellent English. They said their family was the richest in — and numbered twenty-five when they left, but there were now only fourteen survivors. The other eleven, including the husband of one of them and their old grandmother, had been butchered before their eyes by the Kurds. The oldest male survivor of the family was eight years of age. When they left —, they had money, horses and personal effects, but they had been robbed of everything, including even their clothing. They said some of them had been left absolutely naked, and others with only a single garment, and when they reached a village their gendarmes obtained clothes for them from some of the native women.

“Another girl with whom I talked is the daughter of the Protestant pastor of —. She said every member of her family with her had been killed, and she was left entirely alone. These and some others are a few survivors of the better class of people who have been exiled. They are being detained in an abandoned school-house just outside of the town and no one is allowed to enter it. They said they prac-

tically were in prison, although they were allowed to go to a spring just outside the building. It was there I happened to see them. All the others are camped in a large open field with no protection at all from the sun.

"The condition of these people indicates the fate of those who have left and are about to leave from here. I believe nothing has been heard from any of them as yet, and probably very little will be heard. The system that is being followed seems to be to have bands of Kurds awaiting them on the road to kill the men especially and incidentally some of the others. The entire movement seems to be the most thoroughly organized and effective massacre this country has ever seen."

This is the verdict of an eye-witness who saw the Ottoman Government's scheme in full progress. He was witnessing in the twentieth century after Christ the same horrors that had been perpetrated in these regions six and eight centuries before the Christian era. When we read that the Assyrian or Babylonian Government "carried into captivity" such and such a broken people or tribe, we hardly seize the meaning of the statement. Even when we see the process portrayed with grim realism on the conqueror's bas-reliefs, it does not penetrate our imagination to the quick. But now we know. It has happened in our world, and the Assyrian's crime was not so fiendish as the Turk's. "Organised and effective massacre"—that is what

such a deportation means, and that must always have been its implication. But the Assyrian at any rate gave the remnant a chance of life at the end of their journey. They received houses and lands, and often brought a new community to birth in exile. The Turk was more consistent in his cruelty. These people were to be deported to their death, and nothing should reprieve them. "I believe nothing has been heard from those who have left from here, and probably very little will be heard," says the witness. Unfortunately, he was in error. Certainly most of those who had been driven over the mountains from the far north must have perished, as he surmised, on their terrible journey. But there were others from Cilicia and Northern Syria who had a shorter road to travel, and these did not succeed in dying by the way. They were reserved for the last and most hideous scene in the drama.

IV. THE JOURNEY'S END.

The Young Turks' final denouement was not quite a novelty. They had rehearsed it in miniature some years before, when the "Committee of Union and Progress" had supplanted the Hamidian regime at Constantinople, and set itself to eliminate the abuses of the city. The worst eyesore was the army of masterless dogs, which had been permitted by too tolerant generations to establish itself in the streets, and exercise those functions of scavenger for which an easy-going municipal administration had failed to provide by human agency. The Young Turks dealt promptly and effectively with these undesirable denizens of their capital. They collected them on boats and marooned them on a desert island in the Sea of Marmora, where the animals solved the problem of their future by perishing of starvation. When Enver and his friends were thinking out the problem of the Armenians last Spring, they did not forget this successful precedent.

The Armenians, in fact, (or such of them as survived the process of deportation), were to be provided for in the same fashion as the Stambouli

dogs, and two places were selected by the Government for their ultimate disposal. One of these was Sultanieh, a village of the Konia district in the centre of Anatolia, and the choice was scientifically made; for Anatolia is a table-land, with a well-wooded, well-watered periphery of mountain-country towards the sea, where the towns are situated with their Armenian inhabitants, and a cruel desert in its inland heart, where even the Turkman nomad can barely maintain his existence. At Sultanieh, a thousand families of Armenian townspeople, assembled by weary marches from every quarter, were given a taste of the wilderness—a thousand families, and only fifty grown men among them,* to provide for the needs of this helpless flock of women, children and invalids flung thus suddenly upon their own resources, in an environment as abnormal to them as it would be to the middle-class population of any town in England or France. Having established this “agricultural colony” on the waste, the Govern-

* This is vouched for by three independent testimonies—a witness in the A.C.R.; the letter written (as internal evidence shows) by an Armenian Protestant to a citizen of the U.S., which was published in the Armenian paper “*Gotchnag*” on September 4th, 1915; and a letter from Constantinople, dated June 15th, 1915, which will be quoted at greater length below.

ment was content, and troubled itself about its colonists no more.

But Sultanieh was by no means the worst of the charnel-houses to which the remnant of the Armenian race was consigned. The greater number were sent on a longer journey to the south-east, and were concentrated at Aleppo, the capital of Northern Syria, for dispersal among the Arabian provinces beyond.

Between Anatolia and Arabia, the north-western half of the Ottoman Empire and its south-eastern adjunct, there is a violent climatic contrast. The Anatolian highlands are physiologically akin to Europe, and the Armenians who dwell in them are not only Europeans in their civilisation but are accustomed to an essentially European climate—the same climate that prevails in the Balkan Peninsula or Austria-Hungary. But when you descend the last tier of these highlands, or follow the Euphrates down its gorges from the Armenian mountains into the Mesopotamian plains, you pass abruptly out of Europe into country of a semi-tropical character. You find yourself in Northern Arabia, a vast amphitheatre sloping gradually south-eastwards towards the Persian Gulf, and merging into some of the most sultry regions on the face of the earth. This amphitheatre has witnessed many ghastly

dramas in its day, but none, perhaps, more ghastly than the tragedy that is being enacted in it now, when its torrid climate is being inflicted as a sentence of death upon the Armenians deported thither from their temperate homes in the north.

Here is the narrative of a resident at Aleppo who saw them being herded through that city to their doom.

The hideous rumour of their pilgrimage had preceded their arrival, and "at first," he says, "these stories were not given much credence; but as many of the refugees are now arriving in Aleppo, no doubt any longer remains of the truth of the matter. On August 2nd, about eight hundred middle-aged and old women, accompanied by children under the age of ten years, arrived afoot from Diyarbekir, after forty-five days en route, and in the most pitiable condition imaginable. They report the taking of all the young women and girls by the Kurds, the pillaging even of the last bit of money and other belongings, of starvation, of privation, and hardship of every description. Their deplorable condition bears out their statements in every detail.

"I am informed that 4,500 persons were sent from Sughurt to Ras-el-Ain, over 2,000 from Mezereh to Diyarbekir, and that all the cities of Bitlis, Mardin, Mosul, Severeck, Malatia, Besneh, &c., have been depopulated of Armenians, the men and boys and many of the women killed, and the balance scattered throughout the country. If this is true, of which there is little doubt, even the

latter must naturally die of fatigue, hunger and disease. The Governor of Der-el-Zor, who is now at Aleppo, says there are 15,000 Armenians in his city. Children are frequently sold to prevent starvation, as the Government furnishes practically no subsistence."

To be cast adrift to starve, like the pariah dogs of Constantinople ! That was the destiny for which these Armenians had been deported so many hundred agonising miles. Their penultimate stage at that city on the Murad Su (we quoted a description by an eye-witness above) must have seemed to many the culmination of their misery. But here in Aleppo they were suffering something worse, and the worst of all was still to come. We are introduced to it by the sinister name of Der-el-Zor. Aleppo lies in an oasis of the desert, and the river which waters it buries itself in swamps about a day's journey to the south-east of the city. These swamps were allotted to the first comers ; but they did not suffice for so great a company, and the later batches were forwarded five days' journey further on, to the town of Der-el-Zor, the capital of the next province down the course of the Euphrates, where the river takes its way towards the Persian Gulf through the scorching steppes of the Arabian amphitheatre.

On these final marches the victims suffered a change of tormentors. The Kurds lingered in the

hills, and the Bedawin Arabs took up their role. " 'These poor victims of their oppressors' lust and hate might better have died by the bullet in their mountain home than be dragged about the country in this way. Many hundreds have died from starvation and abuse along the roadside, and nearly all are dying of starvation, of thirst, of being kidnapped by the Anazeh Arabs in the desert where they have been taken "—Arabs who themselves succumb to starvation in their native wilderness, as another witness points out. And so they came to Der-el-Zor.

We have a detailed account of what is happening at Der-el-Zor, from a particularly trustworthy source—the testimony of Fräulein Beatrice Rohner, a Swiss missionary from Basle. Fräulein Rohner has personally witnessed the sufferings of the Armenians at Der-el-Zor, and has published her description of them in the "*Sonnenaufgang*" (Sunrise), the organ of the "Deutscher Hilfsbund für Christliches Liebeswerk im Orient" (German League of Help for Work of Christian Charity in the East). Here are some extracts from her narrative :

"At Der-el-Zor, a large town in the desert, about six days drive from Aleppo, we saw a big Khan, all the rooms, the roof and the verandahs of which were crowded with Armenians, composed mostly of women

and children, with a few old men. They had slept on their blankets wherever they could find any shade.

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"For these mountaineers the desert climate is terrible. On the next day I reached a large Armenian camp of goat-skin tents, but most of the unfortunate people were sleeping out in the sun on the burning sands. The Turks had given them a day's rest on account of the large number of sick. It was evident from their clothing that these people had been well-to-do; they were natives of Geben, another village near Zeitoun, and were led by their religious head. It was a daily occurrence for five or six of the children of these people to die by the wayside. They were just burying a young woman, the mother of a little girl nine years of age, and they besought me to take this little girl with me.

"Those who have no experience of the desert cannot picture to themselves the sufferings entailed by such a journey—a hilly desert without shade marching over rough and rugged rocks, unable to satisfy one's scorching thirst from the muddy waters of the Euphrates, which winds its course along in close proximity.

"On the next day I met another camp of these Zeitoun Armenians. There were the same indescribable sufferings, the same accounts of misery—'Why do they not kill us once for all?' asked they. 'For days we have no water to drink, and our children are crying for water. At night the Arabs attack us; they steal our bedding, our clothes that we have been able to get together; they carry away by force our girls, and outrage our women. If any of us are unable to

walk, the convoy of *gendarmes* beat us. Some of our women threw themselves down from the rocks into the Euphrates in order to save their honour—some of these with their infants in their arms.”

We read the same horrors in brief in an article (referred to above) which Professor Hagopian contributed to the Journal “*Armenia*” of Marseilles on September 1st, 1915 :

“These unhappy deported people (belonging in great part to Zeitoun) have been chiefly deposited in two places—one section of them in a swampy region, which has hitherto remained uninhabited on account of the deadly malaria ; while the remainder have been sent to a still more unhealthy place in the direction of the Persian Gulf (*i.e.* Der-el-Zor) so bad that they have begged to be sent to the swamps ; but their petition has not been granted.”

Yet there was nothing but death in the swamps.

“The malaria makes ravages among them, because of the complete lack of food and shelter. How cruelly ironic to think that the Government pretends to be sending them there to found a colony : and they have no ploughs, no seeds to sow, no bread, no abodes ; in fact they are sent with empty hands.”
(A.C.R.)

“When the refugees first came to Aleppo,” the same witness relates, “the Christian population bought food and clothes for them ; but the Vali refused to allow them any communication with the refugees, pretending that they had all they wanted

A few days later they could get the help they needed." In other words, the Government's scheme was baffled by the local Christians' importunity—yet not for long.

"The Armenian population of Cilicia which has been exiled to the provinces of Aleppo, Der-el-Zor, and Damascus, will certainly die of hunger.

"According to our information, the Government has refused to leave in their homes even the insignificant Armenian colonies at Aleppo and Ourfa, who might otherwise have succoured their unhappy brethren who have been driven further south; and the Katholikos of Cilicia, who is still at Aleppo, is busy distributing the succour which we are sending him."

This is from the often quoted letter dated August 15th, 1915, and addressed to a high Armenian ecclesiastic on neutral territory. It shows how the Armenian Katholikos of Cilicia, the most prominent representative of his nation in the vicinity, exerted himself to bring succour when the local Christians had failed. And this is borne out by an earlier letter from Constantinople, dated June 15th, 1915, and published on August 28th, by the Armenian paper "*Gotchnag*" of New York :

"Amongst the thousand families deported to Sul-tanieh, there are scarcely fifty men. Most have made the journey on foot, some of the old women and of

the infants have died on the road, young women with child have had miscarriages, and have been left on the mountains. Even at this moment, in their place of exile, these deported people produce a dozen victims daily, the toll of disease and hunger. At Aleppo it requires at the present £35 (Turkish) per diem to supply the deported people with bread. You can imagine to yourself what must be their situation in the deserts where even the native arabs are famished.

"A sum of money has been sent from Constantinople to the Katholikos of Cilicia who is now at Aleppo, witness of the misery and agony of his flock. Here, at least, the authorities allow the distribution of succour to these unfortunates. At Sultanieh it has so far proved impossible to bring help within their reach, for the Government refuses permission, in spite of the efforts of the American Embassy."

These efforts of foreign philanthropy were persistent, but unavailing. Another Armenian paper, the "*Bahag*," records, on September 9th, that—

"A Commission of five members has left America for Constantinople to help the Armenians in distress. The Mission is anxious to travel in the interior of the country to acquaint itself with the situation on the actual spot and take corresponding action; but the Turkish Government has refused them permission."

Thus the Young Turkish Government, when they had herded the remnant of the Armenians to their "agricultural colonies," insured themselves

against any measures of relief that might at the eleventh hour have deprived their "Armenian problem" of its complete "solution."

Such, in outline, is the story of what has happened to the Armenian population which was dwelling in peace and prosperity throughout the towns and villages of the Ottoman Empire, only eight months ago. And we have confined ourselves in the narrative to the "normal" course of the crime, to the scheme as it was organised by the Government at Constantinople and carried out in general by their local subordinates. We have not mentioned the extravagances of wickedness; and yet the average of horror was surpassed in many cases by the initiative of particularly fiendish governors or particularly brutal gendarmes. Tortures, for instance, of mediæval cruelty were commonly practised before their butchery upon the Armenian men, and the following statement from a foreign resident in an Anatolian town is supported by many less detailed allusions :—

"I was called to a house one day, where I saw a sheet which originated from the prison and which was being sent to the wash. I got to the bottom of the matter by the help of two very reliable persons who witnessed part of it themselves.

"The prisoner is put in a room. Gendarmes standing in twos at both sides and two at the end of

the room administer, each in their turn, bastinadoes as long as they have enough force in them. In the time of the Romans 40 strokes were administered at the very most ; in this place, however, 200, 300, 500 and even 800 strokes are administered. The foot swells up, then bursts open, owing to the numerous blows. The prisoner is then carried back into the prison and to bed by the rest of the prisoners. The prisoners who become unconscious after these blows are revived by means of cold water, which is thrown on their heads.

“On the next day, or, more exactly, during the night, as all ill-treatments are carried on at night in —, as well as in —, the whole bastinadoing is being carried on again in spite of swollen feet and wounds. I was then in —, but in that prison there were also 30 prisoners in number, and all had their feet in such a state that they began to burn and had to be amputated, or were already taken off. A young man was beaten to death in the space of five minutes. Apart from the bastinadoing, other methods were employed, too—such as putting hot irons on the chest.” (A.C.R.)*

But perhaps the most hideous variation on the official programme was perpetrated by the Governor of Trebizond :

“A number of lighters have been loaded with people at different times and sent off toward —. It

* Another testimony, printed in the same report, declares that “the bastinado was used frequently, as well as fire torture (in some cases eyes are said to have been put out).” (A.C.R.)

is generally believed that such persons were drowned. During the early days a large caique, or lighter, was loaded with men supposed to be members of the Armenian committee and sent off toward ——. Two days later a certain Russian subject and one of those who left in the boat returned overland to —, badly wounded about the head and so crazy he could not make himself understood.

“All he could say was ‘Boom! Boom!’ He was arrested by the authorities and taken to the Municipal Hospital, where he died the following day. A Turk said this boat was met not far from — by another boat containing gendarmes, who proceeded to kill all the men and throw them overboard. They thought they had killed them all, but this Russian, who was big and powerful, was only wounded and swam ashore unnoticed. A number of such caiques have left — loaded with men, and usually they return empty after a few hours.”

This account is quoted from a deposition in the American Committee’s report, and the tale is corroborated from innumerable quarters. It has travelled through the length and breadth of the Ottoman Empire, and indeed the evidence for it was convincing enough. The same witness goes on to describe how “A number of bodies of women and children have lately been thrown up by the sea upon the sandy beach below the walls of the Italian monastery on this coast, and were buried by Greek women in the sand where they were found.”

V. FALSE EXCUSES.

All this horror, both the concerted crime and its local embellishments, was inflicted upon the Armenians without a shadow of provocation. "We are at war," the Turkish Government will probably reply ; "We are fighting for our existence. The Armenians were hoping for the victory of our enemies ; they were plotting to bring that victory about. They were traitors at large in a war-zone, and we were compelled to proceed against them with military severity." But such excuses are entirely contradicted by the facts. These Armenians were not inhabitants of a war-zone. None of the towns and villages from which they were systematically deported to their death were anywhere near the seat of hostilities. They were all in the interior of Anatolia, equally far removed from the Caucasian frontier and from the Dardanelles. There was no possibility of their co-operating with the armies of the Entente, and it was equally impossible that they should attempt an insurrection by themselves, for they were not a compact community. They were scattered in small settlements over a wide country, and were every

where in a minority as compared with their Turkish neighbours. Civil and military power were safely in Turkish hands, and the Armenians were particularly unlikely to attempt a coup de main. It must be repeated that these Armenian townsfolk were essentially peaceable, industrious people, as unpractised in arms* and as unfamiliar with the idea of violence as the urban population in Western Europe. The Ottoman Government cannot possibly disguise its crime as a preventive measure, for the Armenians were so far from harbouring designs against it beforehand, that they actually forebore resistance even after the Government had issued their death-warrant. In fact, there are actually only two cases recorded in which the deportation scheme encountered active opposition at all. There was the successful opposition in the Antioch district, where the Armenian villagers took to the hills, and fought for seven weeks with their backs to the sea till they were almost miraculously rescued by the French fleet, under circumstances already related above. And there was the desperate heroism of Shabin Karahissar, a town in the hinter land of Trebizond, where 4,000 Armenians took up arms at the summons to deportation, and held out against the Turkish troops from the middle of May to the

* For years the Government had taken rigorous measures to prevent them from possessing themselves of rifles.

beginning of July. Then the Turks brought up reinforcements and artillery and overwhelmed the town with ease. "Karahissar," it is stated in the letter to the Armenian ecclesiastic, "was bombarded; and the whole population, of the country districts as well as the town, has been massacred without pity, not excepting the bishop himself." Nothing could show better than this how little the Turkish Government had to fear from the Armenians, and how eagerly it seized upon the quickest means to their extermination, as soon as an opportunity appeared.

And this was the Government's procedure towards the helpless, unsuspecting Armenians in the towns. When it had to deal with the less tractable peasant communities in the hills, it gave up any pretence of concealing its intentions, and without waiting to summon them for deportation, at once attacked them nakedly with the sword. Such was the treatment of Zeitoun, an Armenian settlement which for eight hundred years had lived and prospered in virtual independence among the mountains that overlook the Cilician plain.

The Zeitounlis were distinguished from the other Armenians of Cilicia by the possession of arms, and they seem to have girded themselves betimes for the approaching death-struggle. But they were disarmed, it is said, by the promise that, if

they submitted, their defenceless brethren in the lowland villages would be ransomed from destruction by their act. The Turkish promise was broken, of course, as soon as the Turkish object was secured ; and, taken at such a disadvantage, the heroic mountaineers inevitably succumbed.

“The bloody curtain has fallen over Zeitoun, and the fighting stock of these brave mountaineers has been subdued in this memorable year of crime ! As the faithful followers and remnants of the Roupenian dynasty, they had hitherto kept their homes intact and had successfully withstood the Turkish inroads. They have at last been overcome by heavy Turkish forces, and the stronghold of Zeitoun is now in the hands of the enemy !

“It appears that after the failure last winter of the projected Turkish plan of campaign against the Suez Canal, Djemal Pasha, the Commander of the Syrian Army, led a large force of regulars against Zeitoun. The Zeitounlis entrenched themselves in their fastnesses and fought for two or three months against an enemy which outnumbered them greatly, besides being assisted by heavy artillery, hoping that reinforcements would arrive in time for their support. But no help came and they fought to their last cartridge. It was towards the end of May that Zeitoun was taken by the Turks, who massacred all the inhabitants they found. A few hundred old women are said to have been deported to Angora, and others to the plains of Mesopotamia, where report says they are being subjected to grave indignities”—indignities

with which we have been acquainted already in Fräulein Rohner's description of Der-el-Zor, and which the writer just quoted would have called by a stronger name, had he been acquainted with her terrible narrative.

This is the end of Zeitoun, as it is narrated in the July issue of the London journal "*Ararat*." Zeitoun has perished, but further Eastward another peasant community, Sassoun, has been holding the assassins desperately at bay. Sassoun is a federation of forty Armenian villages, situated in the hill country which separates the upper basin of the Tigris from the gorge of the Murad Su. It has led a semi-independent, almost self-sufficing existence for centuries, to the chagrin of the Ottoman Government and the envy of its less prosperous neighbours the Kurds. At Sassoun Abd-ul-Hamid made a preliminary experiment in massacre in 1895, and in May, 1915, the Young Turks marked it out, like Zeitoun, for destruction.

On September 15th the Armenian journal "*Horizon*" of Tiflis published the following communication from Igdir, a post-station on the Russo-Turkish frontier.

"A young man who succeeded in escaping from the villages of Sassoun on August 2nd gives the following information:—'Sassoun, too, has been

visited with massacre. The villages of the plain have all been ravaged. Rouben (one of the leaders in the defence), is still holding out with his lion-hearted companions, a tiny but invincible band, against the sinister foe. But his days are numbered. To save him one would have to lose no time in putting him in possession of unlimited quantities of ammunition.”

The Sassounlis are men of resource. They have even learnt to manufacture ammunition from native materials. But they are being besieged by Turkish regular troops with heavy guns, and all the Kurds are on the war path against them. We may hear any day that Sassoun has fallen, and that 15,000 more Armenians have been ruthlessly destroyed. That is how the Turks are dealing with the few Armenians in a position to defend themselves. Yet the only sin of Sassoun and Zeitoun has been their invidious prosperity—a sin which has no connection whatever with the war. In their case as in the rest, the “war-zone” pretext utterly breaks down, and there is only one instance in which it can be put forward with any show of justification—that of the Armenians resident at Constantinople itself or in its immediate neighbourhood. These Armenians are perhaps the most orderly and industrious of any in the Ottoman Empire, yet as their situation might have enabled them to work in collusion with the Allied forces at the Dardanelles, we will examine their treatment

for a moment, to see whether military considerations may, here at least, have been the real motive for their deportation. There is ample evidence of the facts at our disposal.

“At Adrianople, by order of the Government, all Armenian officials in administrative, public and financial institutions have been dismissed. Turkish soldiers brought in from other districts are committing unheard-of atrocities. The Armenians are continually exposed to persecutions. About fifty Armenians from the city have been imprisoned or exiled. The Armenians are forbidden to go abroad, or even to travel about in the Province.

“The Armenians of Keshan have been deported. The Armenian boatmen of Silivri have been thrown into prison on the charge of revictualling the English submarines.

“The Armenian church and convent at Dhimotika have been confiscated by the Government. The Armenians of this locality have been given two weeks' grace to emigrate elsewhere. For the deportation of the Armenians of Malgara the same two weeks' grace has been given. *Their houses will be occupied by the Turks who have emigrated from Serbia.* The Armenians of Tchorlou have been deported.”

This is quoted from a letter written from Constantinople which was published on August 28th by the Armenian journal “*Gotchnag*” of New

York, and we may follow the sequel in the "Letter to an Ecclesiastic"* so often quoted before :—

"The scheme has just been put into execution in the very neighbourhood of Constantinople. The bulk of the Armenians in the district of Ismid and the Province of Broussa have been forcibly removed to Mesopotamia, leaving their hearths and possessions. They have likewise removed the population of Adapazar, Ismid, Gegveh, Armacha, and the neighbourhood—in fact of all the villages in the Ismid district, except Bagtchedjik, which has been allowed a few days' reprieve.

"Now it is the turn of Constantinople, and the population, which has been stricken with acute panic, is in any case waiting from moment to moment for the execution of its doom. The arrests are innumerable, and those arrested are, at once removed from the capital. Certainly most of them will not survive. It is the retail shopkeepers, born in the provinces but settled at Constantinople, that have been removed up till now, including (six names given as specimens). Efforts are being made to save at least the Armenian population of Constantinople from this horrible extermination of the Armenian nation, in order that in the future we may have at least some point d'appui for the Armenian cause in Turkey."

* This letter bears date August 15th, and must, therefore, be more recent than one published in New York on August 28th, considering the time it takes for the mail to travel from Constantinople to America.

But here, too, all efforts were vain. There had been a preliminary assault upon the Armenians of the capital as early as June 15th, when twenty-six of their most prominent representatives were hanged in public after summary court-martial.* Yet that had passed, and it would have been a light enough sacrifice to pay for the immunity of the rest. But the Government was only biding its time. On September 4th, "*Gotchnag*" reported that :—

"In all the quarters of Constantinople they have begun to draw up a register of Armenians, making separate lists of those who are immigrants from Armenia and those who were born at Constantinople. It is supposed that they are going to deport those that came from Armenia."

After this, events followed quickly. On September 5th, the "*Horizon*" of Tiflis published a telegram from Bukarest, announcing that—

"The Turks are continuing their work of exterminating the Armenians. From Constantinople they have deported the Armenian men. Ten thousand deported men have already been massacred in the mountains of Ismid."

The official scheme once more in operation ! After reading this, we are not surprised to learn from other sources that Armenian women and

* Twenty of the names are published in the July issue of the journal "*Ararat*."

children from Constantinople and Thrace have arrived to swell the "agricultural colony" in the Anatolian desert.

Thus the Armenians of the suburban provinces have been condemned in the end to the same horrible fate as their Anatolian brethren. "Armenian boatmen at Silivri may have revictualled British submarines!"—that is the excuse for it all. But it is not the real motive. That is revealed in the incidental notification that "their houses will be occupied by Turkish refugees from Serbia," and we are inevitably reminded of Talaat Bey's boast that "after this there will be no Armenian question for fifty years."

"Ottomanisation" is, after all, the cue. "As for the Armenian, the place where he was shall know him no more, and the Turk shall inherit his substance and his dwelling." When we re-read our evidence in this light, we see the signs of such a policy appearing with sinister regularity.

"Four districts have been cleared of Armenians; Bosniak mouhadjirs replace the Armenians thus exiled. The Turks are in perfect delirium."

"More than 20,000 Armenians, that have been forced to emigrate from a certain province, are being thrown into the deserts amid nomadic tribes, leaving their houses, gardens and tilled lands to the Turkish mouhadjirs. Deprived of all they possessed, the

unfortunate people have not even graves for their dead.”*

“As soon as the Armenian refugees left their houses, monhadjirs from Thrace took possession of them. The former had been forbidden to take anything with them, and they themselves saw all their goods pass into other hands. There must be about 20,000 to 25,000 Turks in this town now, and the name of the town seems to have been changed to a Turkish one.”

These three testimonies are taken from the American Committee's Report; and here is an extract from a letter, written from Athens and dated July 8th, which describes the process of supplantation in still more incriminating detail :

“Two missionaries of neutral nationality, with whom I am personally acquainted, passed through Athens yesterday. They just began to inform me by saying that the condition of the Armenians in Cilicia was awful. The city of Dörtöyl, after having been evacuated of its Armenian population, has been occupied by Turkish families. The whole of the Armenian inhabitants have been sent away, turned out of their homes, and are naturally suffering from hunger. The exposure is something that cannot be described. Before evacuation, some nine leading merchants were hanged . . .

“Zeitoun has met the same fate. There is not a single Armenian left in Zeitoun, and all the houses

* Extract from an official report dated June 18th, 1915.

are occupied by Turkish people. My friends could not understand exactly what had happened to the Zeitouniots,* but the fact is that special care has been taken by the Turkish authorities that too many of them should not live together. Attempts have been made to make them Mohammedans, and it is known that the authorities attempted to distribute one, two, or three families to each Turkish village in the district of Marash.

“They have attempted to do the same thing to Hadjin, but, somehow or other, only half the inhabitants have left. Naturally the homes of these have been occupied by Turks.

“The Turks of Tarsos and Adana are showing the same disposition as they did before the massacres of 1909.

“Missionaries from Beirout state that the same persecution is in force against Christian Syrians.”

There could be no more damning pieces of evidence than these, for they prove incontrovertibly that the crime against the Armenian race was deliberate, carefully thought out, and highly organised in its execution. These “mouhadjirs” were Moslems from Europe, emigrants from lost Ottoman provinces which had passed under Christian rule. They had been mustering since the Balkan War within the western fringe of the diminished Ottoman Empire, a drifting, unmarsh-

*After reading Fräulein Rohner's evidence from Der-el-Zor, we are better informed.

alled horde. And now suddenly we find them distributed through the Asiatic provinces, even as far afield as Cilicia, in groups nicely proportioned to the Armenian population in each locality, and ready at a moment's notice to occupy the Armenians' places, as soon as the decree for their deportation had gone forth. "As soon as the Armenian refugees left their houses, mouhadjirs from Thrace took possession of them." There is no hitch here, no saving procrastination. The organisation is masterly, and conclusive in its implication. And no consideration was to exempt any portion of the race from the common doom. The Armenians who had been conscribed for the Ottoman army and were actually serving in its ranks, might at least have been protected by the uniform they wore. Instead, their service merely organised them for the slaughter. We have mentioned how they were disarmed and put to labour upon the communications behind the Caucasian front. Here is the final chapter in their story.

"The Armenian soldiers, too, have undergone the same fate. To begin with, all have been disarmed, and are at work constructing roads. We know from a trustworthy source that the Armenian soldiers of the province of Erzeroum, at work on the Erzeroum-Erzindjan road, have all been massacred. The Armenian soldiers of the province of Diyarbekir have all been massacred on the Diyarbekir-Ourfa and

Diyarbekir-Kharpout roads. However, from Kharpout 1,800 young Armenians were despatched as soldiers to Diyarbekir to work there. All were massacred in the neighbourhood of Arghana. We have no news from the other districts, but the same fate has assuredly been inflicted upon them."

This is an extract from the letter addressed to a high Armenian ecclesiastic, and it is supported by the independent and direct testimony of a Moslem soldier in one of the labour-battalions in question, who had been on fatigue-duty burying his massacred Christian comrades. (A.C.R.)

Thus the Ottoman Government sacrificed even military advantage to the complete execution of its Armenian scheme ; and the deed is perhaps the meanest, though far from the most wicked, of all that it has perpetrated. Yet this, too, has been done without a shadow of excuse, to submissive labourers in peaceful districts, separated by impassable mountains from the seat of war. When we turn to what has happened in the real war-zone, we are confronted with atrocities so hideous that they could never be palliated by the most vital military necessity.

VI. MURDER OUTRIGHT.

Turkey's eastern war-zone ran through the home-country of the Armenian race. For we have already explained that the Armenians murdered by deportation were not in general the people of Armenia proper, but for the most part old-established settlements scattered through the towns of Anatolia and Cilicia towards the west. In Armenia proper the Armenians were not confined to the towns; the peasantry in the open country was Armenian as well. In fact, somewhat more than half the Armenians of the Ottoman Empire were still concentrated, before the outbreak of war, in these eastern marches; so that the region defined by the upper courses of the Euphrates and Tigris on the west and south, and by the Russian and Persian frontiers on the north and east, was occupied by a comparatively homogeneous Armenian population, except for the settlements of intrusive Kurds. Here was the historical centre of the nation, its most famous cities, its finest monuments of architecture and art; and here, precisely, the Russian and Ottoman battle lines have swayed to and fro for nearly a year—a year of disaster for the Armenian race.

In brief, the course of the campaign has been as follows. In the early winter, almost immediately after they had intervened in the war, the Turks took the offensive on a large scale across the Russian frontier, and sent another army eastward to invade the Persian province of Azerbaijan ; both movements broke down, and before the spring of 1915 their forces had been driven out of Trans-Caucasia again and compelled to evacuate Azerbaijan, after a transitory occupation of its capital Tabriz. When the Russians began to cross the frontier in their turn, the Ottoman authorities in the border-province of Van let loose the Turkish troops and Kurdish irregulars on the Armenian population. In the countryside the Armenians were overwhelmed, but in the town of Van itself, when they had seen some of their leading men murdered, and massacre overshadowing the rest, they took up arms, expelled the murderers, and stood a siege of 27 days—1,500 defenders against 5,000 assailants equipped with artillery—till they were triumphantly relieved by the advancing Russians on May 17th. Thereby, the eastern shore of Lake Van was cleared of the enemy—the basin of Lake Van is the very heart of Armenia—and in the early summer months the Russian forces pushed slowly round the lake towards the west. But about the end of July, the Turks received heavy reinforcements, and, resuming the

offensive, succeeded in reoccupying Van. Again after three weeks they were ejected from their positions, and now the line runs approximately where it ran in June—right across the basin of Van, with the lake itself dividing the combatants. Once more the Russians seem to be slowly forging ahead, clearing the country of Turk and Kurd. But the geographical conditions are difficult, and the enemy is superior in numbers. The Russians may complete the liberation of Armenia in time; but meanwhile the worst catastrophes have occurred, and the peasantry that was anxiously awaiting their arrival has either been annihilated by massacre or scattered abroad in exile and destitution.

The Turco-Kurdish soldiery began to indulge itself in atrocities the moment hostilities broke out. The Persian province of Azerbaijan contains a large population of Syriac Christians, and the sufferings of these people at the hands of the invading hordes are described with terrible detail in letters from German missionaries* resident among them, letters which were published on October 18th in the Dutch newspaper "*de Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant*."†

* Members of the "Deutsche Orient-Mission."

† The "*Courant*" is the leading journal of Holland, and it is by no means inclined to give undue prominence to facts of ill-savour to Germany or her allies; for it is one of the few Dutch papers that have been privileged by the German Administration to sell copies in Belgium.

From the contents of these letters we select the following :—

“ The latest news is that 4,000 Syrians and 100 Armenians have died of disease alone, at the missions, within the last five months. All villages in the surrounding district, with two or three exceptions have been plundered and burnt, 20,000 Christians have been slaughtered in Ourmia and its environs. Many churches have been destroyed and burnt, and also many houses in the town”

And here is a description from another letter :—

“ In Haftewan and Salmast 850 corpses, without heads, have been recovered from the wells and cisterns alone. Why? *Because the commanding officer had put a price on every Christian head.* In Haftewan alone more than 500 women and girls were delivered to the Kurds at Sandjbúlak. One can imagine the fate of these unfortunate creatures. In Diliman crowds of Christians were thrown into prison and compelled to accept Islam. The men were circumcised. Gülpardjin, the richest village in the Ourmia province, has been razed to the ground. The men were slain, the good-looking women and girls carried away. The same in Babaru. Hundreds of women jumped into the deep river, when they saw how many of their sisters were violated by the bands of brigands, in broad daylight, in the middle of the road. So also at Miandoab in the Suldus district.”

These atrocities on foreign ground are horrible enough, but they are altogether dwarfed in scale

by what the Turks have been doing more recently in their own territory. Their renewed offensive last July was accompanied by the complete extermination of the Armenian peasantry in the districts immediately behind their lines, as well as over the country they traversed in their advance.

The first news of this reached the "*Novoye Vryemya*" of Petrograd on July 22nd.

"The Turkish atrocities in the district of Bitlis are indescribable. After having massacred the whole male population of this district, the Turks collected 9,000 women and children from the surrounding villages, and drove them in upon Bitlis. Two days later they marched them out to the bank of the Tigris, shot them all, and threw the 9,000 corpses into the river.

"On the Euphrates, the Turks have cut down more than 1,000 Armenians, throwing their bodies into the river. At the same time, four battalions were ordered to march upon the valley of Moush, to finish with the 12,000 Armenians inhabiting this valley. According to the latest information, the massacre has already begun. The Armenians are resisting, but through lack of cartridges they will all be exterminated by the Turks. All the Armenians in the Diyarbekir region will likewise be massacred."

At Moush, at any rate, it was not long before the ghastly rumour was confirmed. On August 20th the journal "*Horizon*" of Tiflis, reported that:

"The Turks have massacred the whole male population in the plain of Moush. Only 5,000

people have succeeded in escaping and finding refuge at Sassoun, where the insurgent Armenians are still holding out."

Yet these vaguer narratives were not so terrible as the more detailed account which found its way a month later to America, and was published on September 4th, by the Armenian journal "*Gotchnag*" of New York :

"Incredible news comes in about the massacres at Bitlis. In one village 1,000 Armenians—men, women and children—have been crowded into a wooden house, and the house set on fire. In another large village of the district, only 36 people have escaped the massacre. In another, they roped together men and women by dozens, and threw them into the Lake of Van. A young Armenian of Bitlis, who was in the army, and who, after being disarmed and employed on road-making, succeeded in escaping and reaching Van, relates that the ex-vali of Van, Djevat Bey, has had all males between the ages of fifteen and forty massacred at Bitlis. He has had their families deported in the direction of Sert, but has kept with him all the prettiest girls. *Bitlis is now filled by tens of thousands of Turkish and Kurdish mouhadjirs.*"

The tragedy of the Armenians in the war-zone was thus of a different complexion from their tragedy in the cities of Anatolia. There was more barbaric crudity here in the manner of their

destruction, and we miss the fiendish ingenuity of the deportations. Yet where Enver slew his thousands, Djevat was slaying his tens of thousands ; for he was aiming at nothing less than the extinction of the Armenian population in the homeland of the race.

Yet he did not altogether succeed. The retiring Russians contested stubbornly every mile of ground, and won respite for a certain proportion of the non-combatants to evacuate their threatened homes in time. On that panic-journey through the mountains the sufferings of these refugees were terrible, and there are incidents that rival the agony of their brethren who were being herded over those other mountains of Anatolia hundreds of miles away, under the lash of the Turkish gendarmes. "On the road," writes one of the German missionaries in Azerbaijan, "I found four little children. The mother sat on the ground, her back resting against a wall. The hollow-eyed children ran up to me, stretching out their hands and crying 'Bread ! Bread !' When I came closer to the mother, I saw that she was dying"

And here is a description of the whole scene, from a resident in Trans-Caucasia, who went to the frontier-village of Igdir to arrange for the reception

of the refugees, and watched the harrowing procession passing by :

“I wonder if it is possible to witness a more agonising sight than the present one. Human beings are dying in hundreds from hunger, thirst and exhaustion, and the means for relieving the distress are very scanty. There is absolutely no possibility of even buying bread. The first contingent of refugees has already reached this place. Owing to congestion on the roads, the human tide had to be broken up into two channels : about 100,000 walked through the plain of Abagha, their rear being guarded by the Russian army under General N. and the Armenian regiments under Andranig and Dero ; another 50,000 from the city of Van were diverted into Persia, their rear being defended by the mounted regiments of Keri and Hamazasp. Bloody rear-guard actions are being fought to stem the Turks and Kurds, who are pressing forward in order to cut the line of retreat of the Armenians.”

As dreadful a spectacle, to the eye, as that which other witnesses were beholding at Aleppo or at the crossing of the Murad Su ; and yet what a difference between the two ! Those fainting exiles from the Anatolian and Cilician towns were being driven by remorseless enemies to a lingering death. These peasants of Van were stumbling forward towards life and safety, cheered by the knowledge that the soldiers of a friendly nation were fighting, and dying, to shield their escape. Yet they had still

much to suffer when they reached their destination about the first week in August, 1915.

"All measures which were humanly possible to welcome this seething mass of humanity had been taken at Etchmiadzin, but the strain was beyond anticipation. 'The Fraternal Aid' Committee, under the presidency of the Katholikos, and the Medical Corps were fully represented; while the National Bureau of Tiflis, and the Armenian Committees of Moscow, Bakou and other places, as well as various societies and unions, had sent men and women workers. All these tended the sick, the exhausted, the motherless children, and yet with all this fraternal aid tendered by the Russian Armenians, the supply fell far short of the need. Cholera, dysentery and spotted fever soon showed themselves in a virulent form; while the scarcity of commodities in the Caucasus and local difficulties curtailed the measure of succour that could be given."

The picture is heart-rending, but it is not the same picture as "Der-el-Zor," and the bringers of succour are gradually beginning to cope with the need.

"About 20,000 orphan children have already been cared for; improvised hospitals have been opened in many localities; hygienic measures have been adopted to stamp out the epidemics through which the figure of mortality reached 200 a day early in September. Trainloads of flour, sugar, tea, drugs, clothing and other commodities have been offered by Armenians throughout Russia. Prof. Kishkin, the plenipotentiary of the Federation of Russian Zemstvos,

who was sent to Etchmiadzin to enquire into the condition of these refugees, describes the situation as lamentable, and has asked for £50,000 for immediate needs.”*

Yet from one point of view this break-down of assistance is a factor of hope, for it has happened because the stream of refugees has been so great. No less than 250,000 Armenians from Turkey have passed alive across the Russian frontier—a large company compared to the little band of 5,000 that has found its way to Port Said. This quarter of a million of homeless, starving, disease-stricken people is the one hope and stay of the Armenian race. If they can be saved alive, the vitality of Armenia will have survived the hideous attempt of the expiring Turk to blot her out for ever from the roll of nations.†

* Quoted from the September number of the journal “*Ararat*” of London.

† The “Armenian Refugees (Lord Mayor’s) Fund” has been organised to despatch assistance from Great Britain, and there is really no limit to the amount of money required. Subscriptions may be forwarded to the Hon. Secretary of the Fund at 96, Victoria Street, London, S.W.

VII. THE TOLL OF DEATH.

A quarter of a million of the Armenians in Turkey have escaped. But how many have been destroyed? The Young Turks and their apologists in Germany and elsewhere will probably press that question, for there is no other line of apology for them to adopt. In face of the evidence of which we have presented a few specimens in these pages, they will hardly have the face to deny altogether that this crime has been committed. But they will submit that it has been perpetrated only in an exceptional way, and on a comparatively modest scale.

That would be as shameless a lie as if they attempted nakedly to deny it. Numerical statistics are of course very difficult to obtain, for a criminal always writhes under scrutiny, and in view of the criminal temper of the Turks, the witnesses have had to make their observations in an unassuming way, so as to give the murderers no indication that note of their actions was being taken. And yet the few figures we have speak volumes.

For one thing, we know that the batches of deported Armenians averaged between 2,000 and 5,000

souls—this we have from many eye-witnesses who saw them pass. And many towns provided more than one batch—a witness in the American Committee's report tells us, for example, that the *third* convoy despatched from a certain town included between 4,000 and 5,000 persons. When we remember that there are over 50 towns and villages, *known to us by name*, from which the Armenian inhabitants have thus been herded away, we can make a general estimate of the total number condemned to deportation throughout the length and breadth of Anatolia, Cilicia and Armenia proper.

Here are some actual figures compiled on June 20th, by a witness in Cilicia.

“The deportation began some six weeks ago with 180 families from Zeitoun ; since which time all the inhabitants of that place and its neighbouring villages have been deported ; also most of the Christians in Albistan, and many from Hadjin, Sis, Kars Pazar, Hassan Beyli and Dört Yöl. The numbers involved are approximately, to date, 26,500. Of these, about 5,000 have been sent to the Konia region, 5,500 are in Aleppo and surrounding towns and villages, and the remainder are in Der-el-Zor, Rakka, and various places in Mesopotamia, even as far as the neighbourhood of Bagdad. The process is still going on, and there is no telling how far it may be carried. The orders already issued will bring the number in

this region up to 32,000, and there have been as yet none exiled from Aintab, and very few from Marash and Ourfa.”*—(A.C.R.)

These are the figures for a comparatively small portion of the whole area over which the deportations are being carried out ; and they only cover the first six weeks of a process which has been continuing ever since, and is still in operation at this present moment.

And here are later statistics in confirmation. They show the number of Armenians deported from sixteen Cilician towns and villages (a fraction only of the district included in the survey of June 20th above), who passed through one of the concentration centres up to and including July 30th, 1915.

The total number of families was ... 2,165

The total number of individuals was 13,255

The number of these individuals that

was sent still further afield was ... 3,270

(A.C.R.)

Thus 13,255 individuals, from 16 places alone, passed through one single halting-place ; and we have no record of the others, deported from the

* The Armenians of Ourfa (such of them as escaped murder outright) were of course deported later on. See p. 64 above.

same localities, who were driven towards the desert by different routes, and so escaped this particular witness's observation. And these are far from being the final figures. The witness himself adds a postscript to say that 2,100 more have arrived since his list was made up, and the deportations, as we have said, have been carried out continuously ever since.

These figures may show how many started on the journey ; but what proportion reached their nominal destination ? We have some figures on this head likewise from a letter dated August 16th, 1915, and written from the interior of Anatolia :

“In haste and in secret, profiting by an opportunity, I hasten to convey to you the cry of agony which goes up from the survivors of the terrible crisis through which we are passing at this moment An inquiry has proved that out of a thousand who started, scarcely 400 have reached the place from which I am writing. Out of the 600 to be accounted for, 380 men and boys above 11 years of age, as well as 85 women, have been massacred or drowned outside the town walls by the gendarmes who conducted them ; 120 young women and girls and 40 boys have been kidnapped, so that among all these deported people one does not see a single pretty face. Among the survivors, 60 per cent. are sick ; they are shortly to be forwarded to another specified locality, where certain death awaits them ; it is impossible to describe the ferocity to which they have been exposed ;

they have been travelling for from three to five months ; they have been pillaged two—three—five—seven times ; they have even had their underclothes ransacked ; so far from providing them with food, they even forbid them to drink water when they are passing by a stream ; three-quarters of the young women and girls have been kidnapped ; the rest have been compelled to spend the night with the gendarmes who are conducting them. Hundreds have died of these outrages, and the survivors have to tell of refinements of atrocity so disgusting that one cannot bear their recital.”

The same hideous crime in all its details, with cold statistics to leaven the tale of agony ! The writer remarks that it is “ no hyperbole to say that there is not a single Armenian left in Armenia, and there will soon be none left in Cilicia either.” All had been taken, and, of these, 60 per cent. had perished before they arrived at their ultimate goal. And another set of statistics completely bears out that estimate. We know that nearly 1,000 people were deported from a certain district on the Kara Su, and here is an analysis of their “ experiences.”

“ From one village 212 individuals set out, of whom 128 (60 per cent.) reached Aleppo alive. 56 men and 11 women were killed on the road, 3 girls and 9 boys were sold or kidnapped, and 5 people were missing.

From the same place another party of 696 people were deported. 321 (46 per cent.) reached Aleppo,

206 men and 57 women were killed en route. 70 girls and young women, and 19 boys, were sold. 23 were missing.

From another village a party of 128 was deported, of whom 32 (25 per cent.) reached Aleppo alive. 24 men and 12 women were killed en route. 29 girls and young women and 13 boys were sold ; and 18 were missing."

This document bears date July 19th, 1915, and is signed by the head of a college, who is a citizen of a neutral country, and is in a position to know the facts.

Such are the concordant estimates of two independant witnesses ; and anyone who reads their narrative, or the other narratives from which we have quoted above, cannot fail to conclude for himself that the percentage of survivors must have been extraordinarily low. Whatever the exact statistics in each case, certainly nothing but a remnant ever arrived at Sultanieh or Der-el-Zor. The vast majority always perished by the way. Yet we have it on the clear authority of a witness in the A.C.R., that the German Consul at Aleppo—and surely this gentleman would not be guilty of exaggeration — has estimated the number of Armenians that arrived there at no less than 30,000. Unfortunately we are not told the date to which this figure applies ; but even if it were

the final figure for the most recent date attainable, it would prove destruction of life on a scale which not even a German consul, inured to the statistics of Belgium, could treat as exceptional in character or inconsiderable in extent.

Yet even if the statistics were more abundant and more eloquent still, they might fail to convey to our imagination the actuality of what has happened. A nation blotted out ! It is easy to say it with the lips, more difficult to realise what it means, for it is something totally beyond our experience. Perhaps nothing brings it home more crushingly than the record which we have of one little community of sensitive, refined Armenian people, and of the terrible fates by which they were individually overtaken. They were the members of an educational establishment in a certain Anatolian town, which was endowed and directed by a society of foreign missionaries ; and the following summary is taken directly from a letter which was written by the President of the College after the blow had fallen.

“ I shall try to banish from my mind for the time the sense of great personal sorrow because of losing hundreds of my friends here, and also my sense of utter defeat in being so unable to stop the awful tragedy or even mitigate to any degree its severity, and compel myself to give you concisely some of

the cold facts of the past months as they relate themselves to the College. I do so with the hope that the possession of these concrete facts may help you to do something there for the handful of dependents still left to us here.

“(i) *Constituency*: Approximately two-thirds of the girl pupils and six-sevenths of the boys have been taken away to death, exile or Moslem homes.

“(ii) *Professors*: Four gone, three left, as follows :

“Professor A., served College 35 years. Professor of Turkish and History. Besides previous trouble arrested May 1st without charge, hair of head, moustache and beard pulled out in vain effort to secure damaging confessions. Starved and hung by arms for a day and a night and severely beaten several times. Taken out towards Diyarbekir about June 20th and murdered in general massacre on the road.

“Professor B., served College 33 years, studied at Ann Arbor. Professor of Mathematics, arrested about June 5th and shared Professor A.'s fate on the road.

“Professor C., taken to witness a man beaten almost to death, became mentally deranged. Started with his family about July 5th into exile under guard and murdered beyond the first big town on the road. (Principal of Preparatory Department, studied at Princeton.) Served the College 20 years.

“Professor D., served College 16 years, studied at Edinburgh, Professor of Mental and Moral Science. Arrested with Professor A. and suffered same tortures,

also had three finger nails pulled out by the roots, killed in same massacre.

“Professor E., served College 25 years, arrested May 1st, not tortured but sick in prison. Sent to Red Crescent Hospital and after paying large bribes is now free, in ———.

“Professor F., served the College for over 15 years, studied in Stuttgart and Berlin, Professor of Music, escaped arrest and torture, and thus far escaped exile and death because of favour with the Kaim-makam secured by personal services rendered.

“Professor G., served the College about 15 years, studied at Cornell and Yale (M.S.), Professor of Biology, arrested about June 5th, beaten about the hands, body and head with a stick by the Kaim-makam himself, who, when tired, called on all who loved religion and the nation to continue the beating ; after a period of insensibility in a dark closet, taken to the Red Crescent Hospital with a broken finger and serious bruises. Now free, in ———.

“(iii) *Instructors, Male.*

“Four reported killed on the road in various massacres, whose average term of service is eight years. Three not heard from, probably killed on the road, average term of service in the College four years.

“Two sick in Missionary Hospital.

“One in ———.

“One engaged in cabinet work for the Kaim-makam, free.

"One owner of house occupied by the Kaim-makam, free.

"(iv) *Instructors, Female.*

"One reported killed in Chunkoosh, served the College over twenty years.

"One reported taken to a Turkish harem.

"Three not heard from.

"Four started out as exiles.

"Ten free.

"Of the Armenian people as a whole we may put an estimate that three-fourths are gone, and this three-fourths includes the leaders in every walk of life, merchants, professional men, preachers, bishops and government officials

"I have said enough. Our hearts are sick with the sights and stories of abject terror and suffering. The extermination of the race seems to be the objective, and the means employed are more fiendish than could be concocted locally. The orders are from head-quarters, and any reprieve must be from the same source"

There were colleges like this, well staffed and well attended, in all the larger Anatolian towns. The atmosphere within their walls was every bit as refined, as cultured, as civilised as the atmosphere of our schools and colleges in Western Europe. Their humanising influence was one of the most beneficent factors in the Ottoman Empire. And this influence has been systematically rooted

up, and brutally destroyed, by the indiscriminate dispersion and massacre of both pupils and professors.

The flower of the nation has perished in company with the innumerable mass of undistinguished victims ; and the leaders of the Armenian Church have drawn on themselves the especial malice of the persecutor, by their courageous efforts on behalf of their flocks. On Sept. 22nd the paper "*Armenia*" of Marseilles reproduced from the "*Hayasdan*" of Sofia the following list of ecclesiastical victims up to that date :

"The metropolitan of Diyarbekir, Tchilghadian—burnt alive.

The bishop of Ismid, Hovagimian—imprisoned.

The superior of the seminary at Armacha—imprisoned.*

The metropolitans of Broussa and Kaisariyeh, under arrest.

The metropolitan of Sivas, Kalemkiarian—assassinated.

The metropolitan of Tokat, Kasbarian — imprisoned.

The metropolitan of Shabin-Karahissar, Torikian—hanged.

* The letter to the Armenian ecclesiastic in neutral territory states that he has been deported with his clergy and seminarists.

The metropolitan of Samsoun, Hamazasb—imprisoned.

The metropolitan of Trebizond, Tourian—under arrest.*

The metropolitan of Kemakh, Humayak—imprisoned.

The metropolitan of Kharpout, Khorenian—assassinated.†

The metropolitan of Tchar-Sandjak, Nalbandian—hanged.

The metropolitans of Aleppo and Bitlis—imprisoned.

The metropolitan of Erzeroum, Bishop Saadetian—assassinated.”

“From another source”, says the “*Arménia*,” “we learn that the metropolitan of Baibourt, the Archimandrite Anania Hazarabedian, has been hanged in company with eight Armenian notables.” ‡

It is an amazing list, yet it is wholly consistent with the programme of the Ottoman Government. The Armenian Church has been the bulwark of the Armenian race, and the race is marked down for

* As stated by “*Golchnag*” on Sept. 4th.

† Corroborated by the letter to the Armenian ecclesiastic in neutral territory.

‡ Corroborated by the letter to the Armenian Ecclesiastic.

extermination. Talaat Bey meant what he said, and the Young Turks have given a sardonic touch of completeness to their work by murdering the two Armenian representatives in their much-advertised "Ottoman Parliament". The letter to the Armenian ecclesiastic in neutral territory informs us that "MM. Zohrab and Vartkes, the Armenian deputies, who had been sent on their way to Diyarbekir for trial by court-martial, were killed the other day near Aleppo before reaching their destination." Abd-ul-Hamid would smile again if he heard.

VIII. THE ATTITUDE OF GERMANY.

“The orders are from head-quarters,” writes one of the witnesses quoted in the last chapter, “and any reprieve must be from the same source.” But where are these “head-quarters”? For it is vitally important to penetrate to them, if the remnant of the Armenians that are lingering in agony at Sultanieh and Der-el-Zor, are still to be rescued from their doom. We have traced the crime back to Enver and his gang at Constantinople, but that is not enough. By participating in the war, Turkey contracted herself into the apprenticeship of Germany, and abandoned her freedom of action to Germany’s lead. What is the attitude of Turkey’s patron towards the organised murder of the Armenian race? And what action has been taken in the matter by the corps of German officials on Ottoman territory?

“According to the testimony of the refugees from Syria, several German consuls have directed or encouraged the massacres of the Armenians. Special mention is made of Herr Rossler, consul at Aleppo,* who has gone to Aintab to direct the massacres in

* “The man who contrived the plot against unfortunate Zeitoun.”

person, and the notorious Baron Oppenheim, who initiated the idea of deporting to Ourfa the women and children belonging by nationality to the Allies, though he knew well enough that these unfortunates would be unable to avoid witnessing there the barbarous acts committed by the troops in the very streets of the town, which are literally drenched in blood."

That is a sinister rumour, but of course it is not evidence of a conclusive order. It is merely a cablegram from Cairo which was published towards the end of September in the Paris press. We find the same suspicion, however, reappearing in the "*Gotchnag*" of New York on September 4th :

"A foreign correspondent reports that provincial governors who show lack of vigour in executing the order to deport the Armenians, are taken to task by the German officials. The latter participate in the execution of the deportation scheme, and redouble its rigours. The correspondent declares, on the basis of such evidence as this, that this plan of exterminating the Armenians has been conceived by the Germans, and that it has been put into execution on their advice."

Everyone will see that these testimonies are not of the same value as those on which our narrative of the crime itself is based. The active participation of German officials is not sufficiently proven ; and even if further evidence should convict Herr Rossler and Baron Oppenheim beyond

any doubt, we should still have no warrant for accepting the inference of "*Gotchnag's*" correspondent as to the general complicity of all German officials in Anatolia. It is, on the whole, unlikely that the German authorities initiated the crime. The Turks do not need tempters. But when that has been said, all that can be submitted in their defence has been exhausted; and if faint praise is damning, they assuredly stand condemned. For it is clear that, whoever commanded the atrocities, the Germans never made a motion to countermand them, when they could have been stopped at the start by a single word. It is no exaggeration to say that they could have been stopped absolutely, for it is obvious that, by entering the war, Turkey placed herself entirely in Germany's power. She is dependent on Germany for munitions of war and leadership in battle, for the preservation of her existence at the present and for its continuance in the future, should Germany succeed in preserving it now. The German Government had but to pronounce the veto, and it would have been obeyed; and the central authorities at Berlin could have ensured its being obeyed through their local agents on the spot. For ever since 1895, Germany has been assiduously extending the network of her consular

service over all the Asiatic provinces of the Ottoman Empire. *In every administrative centre throughout those districts where massacres and deportations have occurred—in Anatolia, Cilicia, and Armenia proper—there is a German consul; and the prestige of these consuls is unbounded. They are the agents of a friendly power, the only power that offers Turkey her friendship with no moral conditions attached; and a friend, moreover, that is Turkey's puissant protector and ally, the invincible conqueror, to the Turk's docile imagination, of a hostile world in arms against the pair. It is impossible to doubt that those German consuls could have saved the Armenian nation, if they had taken steps to do so, or to suppose that the German Government was not informed of what was happening in good time.*

The consuls did not take any action, and we know the reason why. They were instructed from "headquarters" to hold their hand.

"Last July the United States Government invited the co-operation of the German Government in an effort to end the outrages which have resulted in wholesale and systematic murder of fully one half of the million and a quarter Armenians living under Turkish control. . . .

"No reply ever was received from Germany to the invitation to co-operate in this work."

This statement was published by the New York "*Herald*" on October 6th, 1915. It has not been challenged yet; and the identical standpoint adopted by German officials of every grade unmistakeably reflects the German Government's deliberate policy.*

If the German consuls on the spot remained criminally apathetic, it was because their chief at Constantinople gave them the cue.

"The American Ambassador at Constantinople, after asking the Turkish Government in vain to stop the massacres, proceeded to address himself to the German Ambassador; but Herr Wangenheim declared that he could not interfere in any way with Turkey's internal affairs."

* This policy must not, of course, be taken to express the sentiments of the German people as a whole. The testimony of a German Sister of Mercy and of German missionaries shows that they were no less horrified at the atrocities than the American missionaries. So would all humane people be in Germany itself, if they knew the naked facts—facts which it is not likely that their Government will permit them to learn. The Government succeeded in keeping from the people the knowledge of the truth with regard to the massacres of 1895-6, when a well-drilled press announced that the Armenian horrors were invented by the English to serve some selfish purpose of their own.

That is a quotation from the previously cited letter written from Athens on July 8th, 1915. It is only a rumour, of course, and Herr Wangenheim* might have contradicted it had he wished to do so ; but he would hardly have found it worth his while, in view of the pronouncements hazarded by his more conspicuous colleague at Washington. Count Bernstorff's first inspiration was to deny the crime altogether. "The alleged atrocities committed in the Ottoman Empire appear to be pure inventions," he declared. Armenia is more remote than Belgium, and what happens there is apt to be veiled in corresponding obscurity. But in this case the light has broken through, and has driven Count Bernstorff to revise his posture. After further conference with his principals in Europe he

"submitted to the United States Government a report of the German Consul General at Trebizond admitting and defending a massacre of Armenians on the ground that the Armenians were disloyal to the Turkish Government and secretly were aiding and abetting Russia."

There is no doubt about these "démarches" of the Ambassador at Washington. They have struck the attention of the nation to which he is

* He has died in the meantime.

accredited, and are written large over the editorial columns of the American press.*

And then there is the Imperial Chancellor himself. When the first year of the German war, and the fourth month of the Armenian atrocities, had completed their parallel cycle, and he addressed the Reichstag in review of the situation, he took occasion to congratulate his countrymen on "their marvellous regeneration of Turkey." Could any endorsement of Enver's "solution" be more unqualified?

Having satisfied ourselves thus as to the attitude of German "Official Circles," we will now let some individual Germans express their opinion for a moment through the mouthpiece of their press.

"The Armenian," writes the "*Frankfurter Zeitung*" on October 9th, "enjoys, through his higher intellect and superior commercial ability, a constant business advantage in trade, tax-farming, banking, and commission-agency over the heavy-footed Turk, and so accumulates money in his pocket, while the Turk grows poor. That is why the Armenian is the best-hated man in the East—in many cases not unjustly, though a generalisation would be unfair. It is easily understandable, how-

* The quotation from the New York "*Herald*" is taken at random from several dozen leading articles of identical purport in as many other journals.

ever, that the uneducated populace in Anatolia, with half-educated officials, fanatical Moslem ecclesiastics, and hot-headed chauvinists at their head, should fall victims to such a generalisation, and destroy the innocent with the guilty.

“The difficulties that confront the Turkish Government in the Armenian question, must not be underestimated. There is the lack of good communications in Anatolia, the utter absence of all initiative in the lesser grades of officialdom, the fury of the populace.

“But in spite of these difficulties the Turkish Government *must* gather the reins into its hands. The public opinion of Germany is firmly convinced that the Allied Government, after displaying to the world so magnificently its external strength, will now give proof of its internal strength as well.”

The “*Frankfurter*” is a liberally-minded paper, and we give it all honour for its sentiments and its admonitions. But any one who has read these pages will perceive that, whether half-wilfully or not, it has drawn for itself an entirely erroneous picture of the situation. “The lesser officials’ lack of initiative”—that would be a reasonable mitigation if the crime were an outburst of fanaticism from below ;* but it tells the other way if the

* That there has been no general outburst of this kind is not the fault of Germany, whose professors have recklessly been preaching the Pan-Islamic Jihad (Holy War), with all its implications of hatred and passion.

crime has been organised from above. And are the communications of Anatolia so bad? They did well enough for the Turkish mouhadjirs. And even if roads and railways are scarce, telegraphs are not. Every big town is in telegraphic communication with Constantinople. Along these very wires Enver and Talaat radiated their peremptory signal to their automaton-like subordinates; and Herr Wangenheim (if von Jagow had given the word) might have issued as many telegraphic counter-orders to his energetic German consuls, whose initiative in their own spheres (whatever may be the case with their local Turkish compeers) has certainly never been called in question.

No, if the "*Frankfurter Zeitung*" represents public opinion in Germany, then the German people is simply ignorant of the facts. Yet there are some publicists, at any rate, who are better informed.

"If the Porte considers it necessary that Armenian insurrections and other goings on should be crushed by every means available, so as to exclude all possibility of their repetition, then that is no 'murder' and no 'atrocities,' but simply measures of a justifiable and necessary kind."

Thus writes Count Ernst von Reventlow in the "*Deutscher Tageszeitung*," and he has formulated

against his country a charge of complicity in the crime which we might have hesitated to bring against her ourselves.

“Germany cannot intervene in the internal affairs of her ally.” That is how the conclusion was expressed by the German Ambassador at Constantinople. But we can hardly leave it at that. Is Germany’s motive in complicity really no more than a disinterested consideration for the sensibilities of her Turkish partner? “The Armenian,” as we have quoted from the “*Frankfurter Zeitung*” “is the best hated man in the East on account of his higher intellect and superior commercial ability.” Well, now the Armenian, with all his talents, has been removed, and here is the consequence, as it is set forth by a witness in the American Committee’s Report:—

“The results (of the crime) are that, as 90 per cent. of the commerce of the interior is in the hands of the Armenians, the country is facing ruin. The great bulk of business being done on credit, hundreds of prominent business men other than Armenians are facing bankruptcy. There will not be left in the places evacuated a single tanner, moulder, blacksmith, tailor, carpenter, clay-worker, weaver, shoemaker, jeweller, pharmacist, doctor, lawyer or any of the professional men or tradesmen, with very few exceptions, and the country will be left in a practically helpless state.” (A.C.R.)

Who profits? Certainly not the Turk, however much it may gratify his envy. The Armenians, as we have emphasised again and again, were the only native element in the Ottoman Empire with a European training and a European character. They alone, by this "higher intellect and superior business ability," were capable of regenerating the Empire from within, and raising it to the level of an organised, civilized, modern state. As it is, that possibility has been destroyed for ever, and the country has been "left in a practically helpless condition." Who profits? Not the Armenian, not the Turk. The Armenians, had they been spared, were destined to occupy a very desirable "place in the sun," to their own profit and to the benefit of their Turkish neighbours. Are the *Germans* to be their heirs and executors, and is that the "Regeneration of Turkey," to which the Imperial Chancellor alluded so paradoxically in August, 1915?

This brings us face to face with a question which we have been approaching very gradually, without the possibility of drawing back. But we hasten to add that the question is still an open one. Even at this eleventh hour, Germany may provide us with an answer that we should welcome all the more because of the very faintness of our hope, if she will only stretch forth her hand

and save the Armenians that remain, from the doom of the murdered majority.

But whatever Germany does, she must do it quickly, not only in order to snatch the last victims from the jaws of death, but because the judgment of humanity refuses to tarry, and is already going forth over all lands.

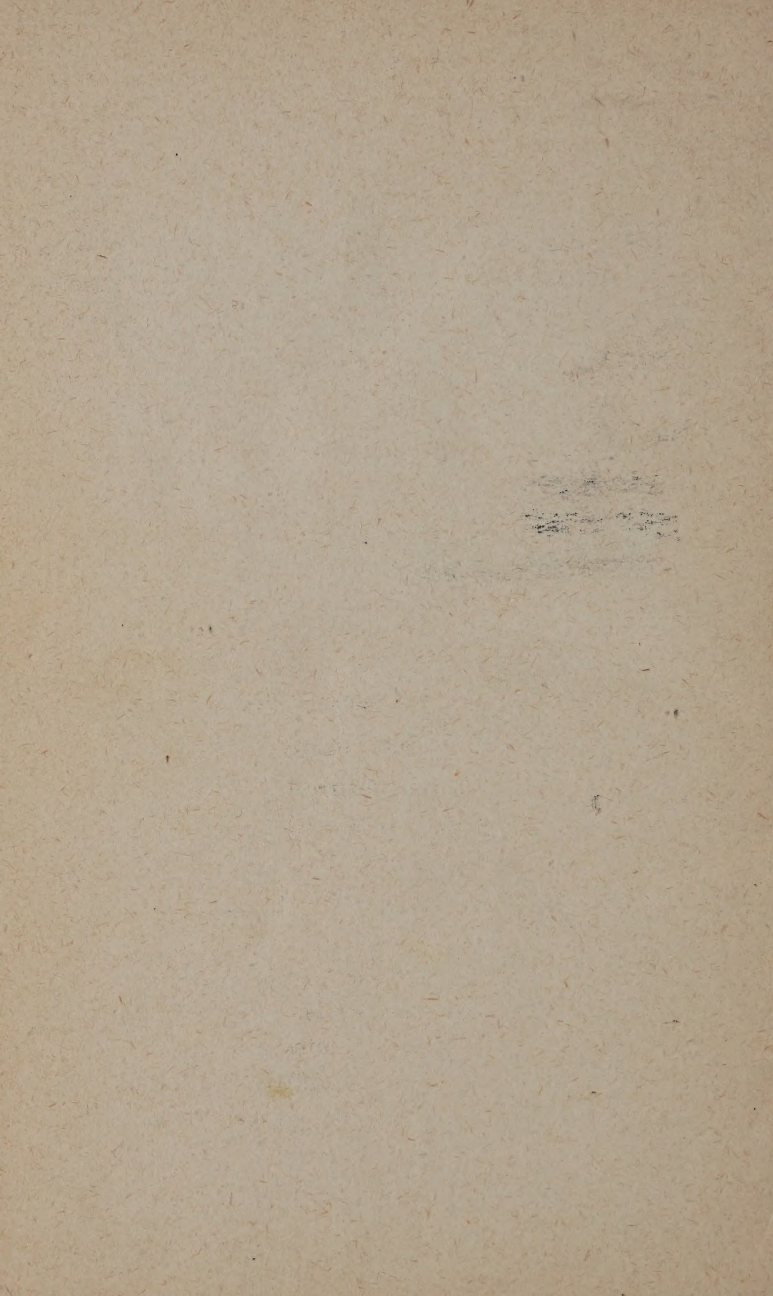
“This shameful and terrible page of modern history which is unfolding in distant Armenia is nothing but an echo and an extension of the main story, the central narrative, which must describe the German incursion into Belgium fourteen months ago. That was the determining act, that was the signal to Turk and Kurd.

“To-day the world looks neither with surprise nor with incredulity at the terrible history that comes to us from the remoter regions of Asia Minor.

“This thing that Germany has done in the world is not a mere injury to written law. That is but a minor detail. What she has done is to bring us all back in the Twentieth Century to the condition of the dark ages.”*

That is the indictment. Let Germany cease to deserve it.

* From the New York “*Tribune*” of October 8th, 1915

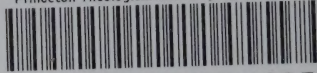


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